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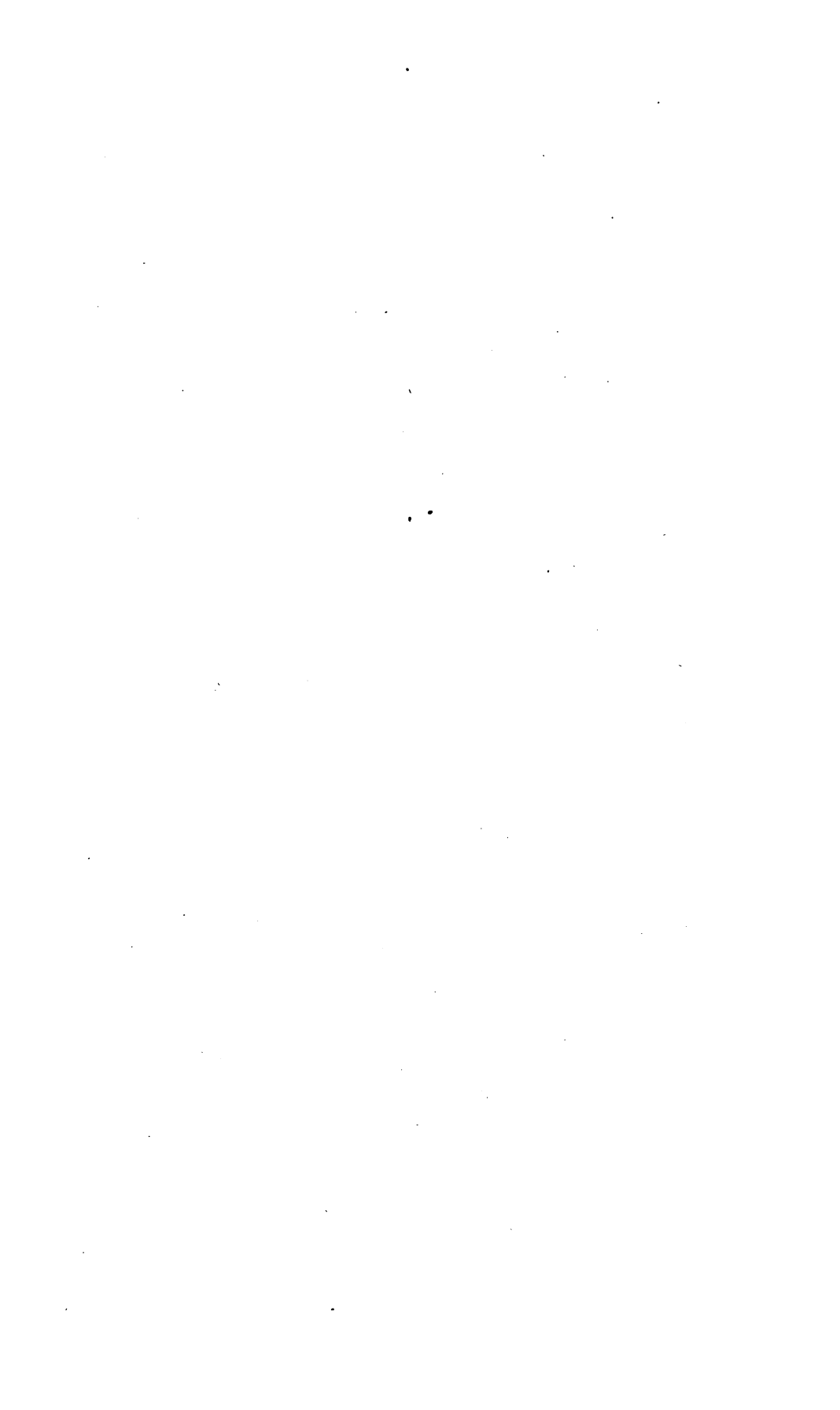
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Scott, W.

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"MOREDUN."

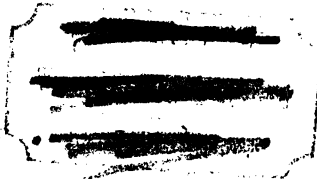
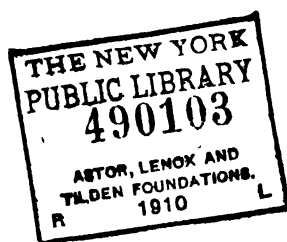
A TALE OF THE TWELVE HUNDRED AND TEN.

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,
AUTHOR OF "WAVERLY," "IVANHOE," &c., &c.

NEW YORK:
W. P. FETRIDGE & CO., PUBLISHERS,
FRANKLIN SQUARE.

BOSTON:
FETRIDGE & CO.,
STATE & WASHINGTON STREETS,
1855.



My dear Wm -

Letter of instructions for
to write it and the

The story which
the foreign minister
to be composed when
the has taken some
direction of it but
what you could
paper

He has perceived
I had at one time
things drawn from
gave up - for I saw
great charm and
the impression of
merits but those of
a generally, among
painting character
which would never

are a great many
persons and places
of historical interest

I consider the
you that work
foreign minister
perhaps - At the
present to you

a most serious
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years

Tues 4th November 1826

on condemned to make of this notice
or I cannot quite be satisfied with myself in any way
is not saying into whose hands may fall
himself has told me about your cliff friend
and is as clearly the cat's paw man who requires
some worth. but as it appears to me that
it is undoubtedly to heart or have brought over
- conclusion by my consenting to her doing
not be told of unlike he had received the permission of

himself for a long time past of a tale which
tendon of making the first of a series of such
the history of fiction - and in which I afterwards
however that though as always possessed a
I followed her to keep it because I was under
it a mystery which offered no particular
myst and a plot would not appear as a
myst which had the highest object of
- that would be to take a step back and
do - Besides as far as I can recollect there
is an anachronism and freedom used with
which are not in keeping with the character
which I now aspire

on that in authorising my daughter to give
a preface for the imaginary tale of a
man I only permit a change of proper
name in allowing Anne to make a
preface but in spite after all I must make
of it show regarding it - for I tell you candidly
myself to be the real malade maymama
- that if at any time you take the fancy
to take you will do so with the initials
you will do - all that you can on favour
is the idea that it is a boon of your own

to do something for you personally
of character than that of humouring
a craftman but you know how I am
sent - believe however that you have
a friend than

YAT 57

INTRODUCTION;

BEING A SUPPLEMENT TO THE MEMOIRS OF SIR WALTER
SCOTT, BART., BY LOCKHART;

TRANSLATED FROM THE FIRST EDITION OF "MOREDUN" PUBLISHED
IN FRANCE.

About thirty years since there came to reside in Paris a rich, elderly German merchant, retired from business, whose eccentricities were mingled with a degree of generosity and bonhomie which rendered him a great favorite with all who knew him.

I had the pleasure, although then a very young man, of enjoying a good deal of his society, having been employed to assist him in some statistical works and inquiries. For this assistance he expressed himself in such grateful terms, that I would doubtless have received a very substantial mark of his generosity, had his fortunes not suddenly overtaken him, which broke his heart and sent him rapidly to the grave. Among the wreck of his valuable movable property he retained a writing-desk, which, during his brief illness, he often pointed to, and said, with a melancholy smile, that it was all he wished to leave me, but that it would be a more durable memorial than any sum he could have bequeathed me.

I did not at the time attach much weight or meaning to his words—for the whims and oddities of the worthy old man were very marked, and I partook largely in the general opinion, that much of what he often spoke of as real was but an idle fantasy or waking dream.

Among those dreams we all ranked an often-repeated assertion, that he expected to be, or was, the possessor of an original manuscript of the great Scottish Novelist, Sir Walter Scott. He said he was to procure, or had procured, it through the intermediation of a Mr. William Spencer, an intimate friend of Scott's, to whom he had been of some service.

We all knew by his library that he was an ardent admirer of Goethe and of Scott; but that he should actually be in possession, or have any reasonable expectation, of an original manuscript of either, we deemed an entire, although harmless hallucination.

The old gentleman died, as I have said, in poverty: his widow and daughter left Paris immediately afterward for Germany, we were told, and I saw nothing more of the writing-desk, and thought no more of it.

My astonishment may be imagined when, in the month of September, 1854, I received a box, with a note from his daughter, now married in Bavaria, accompanying the writing-desk, which, she said, her mother and she had taken away inadvertently among other articles—that they

would have sent it to me long ere then, never having forgotten that it was mine by her father's dying bequest; but that they feared the expense of carriage would be greater, perhaps, than its value. The visit of a relative to Paris gave them now, she added, an opportunity of sending it free of any charge.

If I was surprised to receive the writing-desk after such an interval, still more so was I with its contents—for among them I found, besides a singular collection of royalist tracts,* relating to the Restoration, a package containing the MS. of "*Moredun, a tale of the 1210*," accompanied by the following letter:

"PARIS, 4th November, 1826.

"MY DEAR W—— S——,

"I am constrained to make of this note a letter of initials, for I am not quite satisfied with myself in agreeing to write it, and there is no saying into whose hands it may fall.

"The story which Anne has told me about your daft friend, the foreign monomaniac, is as clearly the case of a man who requires to be cognosed as I ever met with; but, as it appears to me that she has taken it most ridiculously to heart, we have brought our discussion of it to a conclusion by my consenting to her doing what you could not be told of until she had received the permission of papa.

"She has possessed herself, for a long time past, of a tale which I had, at one time, the intention of making the first of a series of such things drawn from the history of Scotland—a notion which I afterward gave up: for Anne, however, that story has always possessed a great charm, and I allowed her to keep it, because I was under the impression that a mere story, which offers no particular merits but those of events and a plot, would not appear advantageously among works which had the higher object of painting character—that would be to take a step backward, which would never do—besides, as far as I can recollect, there are a great many anachronisms and freedoms used with persons and places which are not in keep-

* These very curious papers, partly MS., and partly printed, are deposited with Messrs. Low and Son, my publishers in London. They seem to me to have formed the nucleus of a collection intended for presentation to the author of the *Life of Napoleon*. The German's intentions in regard to this, and in fact the views of all the parties, appear to have been frustrated by their decease within a short period of each other.

ing with the character of historian to which I now aspire.

"I consider, then, that in authorizing my daughter to give you that work as a panacea for the imaginary ills of a foreign monomaniac, I only permit a change of proprietorship. At the same time, in allowing Anne to make a present to you of what is but a trifle after all, I must make a most serious stipulation regarding it—for I tell you candidly that I believe W. S. himself to be the real *malade imaginaire*—that stipulation is, that if, at any time, you take the fancy of publishing that tale, you will do so with the initials only, and that you will do all that you can in fairness do to countenance the idea that it is a bairn of your ain.

"I wish I could do something for you personally of some less doubtful character than that of humoring the caprices of a daft man; but you know how I am placed at present. Believe, however, that you have no more sincere friend than W. S."

Here then I had before me, after a lapse of twenty-three years, irrefragable proof—that my old respected friend, if eccentric, had not, in this instance at least, been visionary; and here, also, I had a most singular explication of the mystery which hung over his dying words—and that he had, indeed, left me a legacy much more to be prized than any sum he could have bequeathed me even in his most prosperous days.

I lost no time in putting the Romance into the hands of competent translators: and at every step I obtained new proofs to my own mind of its being, indeed, the production of the pen of the "Great Unknown," but that either the modesty or the severity of the judgment of the author had greatly underrated its intrinsic merits.

My next step was to draw up an account of the extraordinary manner in which this valuable legacy had reached me, with every particular, however minute, which I could remember of the donor, to print it, and to lodge it according to the usual form with the Minister of the Interior at Paris. The MS. of this account was sent to the printer on the 12th November—on the 24th the printed memoir was deposited in the bureau of the Government, and on the 25th copies were transmitted to the Editors of the leading journals in Paris and London. The same day a short notice of the discovery appeared in the *Sun* newspaper in London (sent, unknown to me, by a gentleman who had seen the proof-sheet in the printing-office and the original letter in my bureau)—and, singularly enough, the same day Mr. Lockhart died suddenly at Abbotsford in Scotland. I notice this circumstance, because it has been unscrupulously alleged, in the face of my repeatedly proving to the contrary, that I delayed the notice until after Mr. Lockhart's death; whereas I knew nothing whatever of that gentleman nor of his illness, and his death was neither looked for nor known in Paris until several days after I had published the account of the discovery of *Moredun*.

And, here, it is incumbent on me to state that, although several years since, I read, and read with profound admiration, the translations of

some of Sir Walter Scott's novels; I really knew nothing of the history, personal or literary, of that eminent man. No translation of Mr. Lockhart's Biography of Scott was ever made into French, and the notices which I may have seen of him, were, in every respect, meagre and uninteresting.

I repeat, that it is incumbent on me to state this fact distinctly, not merely to answer the absurd insinuations that I myself wrote some of the early favorable notices of the MSS., but to account for my not fortifying, at the very first, my narrative with some of the most remarkable circumstances which I shall have occasion to refer to in this introduction. Had my object been to construct a *plausible* story, instead of narrating, as my social and official position in Paris demanded, the plain but singular truth, I would naturally have sought for materials (better suited for *Barnumizing* the manuscripts) in the Life of Scott, than in my reminiscences of Spencer's "daft friend."

As I anticipated, that which seemed to myself so strange as to look almost like a dream, was received very generally with incredulity. I had, however, placed the letter and the other MSS., openly in my bureau, and had solicited their closest inspection and investigation. Of all those who came and examined them, those expressed themselves the most convinced of their authenticity who had been the most intimate with Sir Walter Scott and his writings. The distinguished English visitors on that occasion did *not* include, as I had ventured to hope, the British Ambassador. I have since learned that it is only at the Court of Naples where being present at the exhumation of literary treasures comes within the circle of diplomatic routine.

My own talented countryman, M. Philarète Chasles, formed an honorable exception among the generally frightened literati of Paris; who seemed to be paralyzed between their doubts as to the existence of *any* manuscripts and their fears for the publishers of *complete* editions of Scott's works. M. Chasles was so thoroughly convinced by the letter of W. S., that he devoted five columns of the *Journal des Débats* to a most minute and satisfactory examination of the evidence.

In the mean time, a storm was brewing in England; which growled away in various quarters of the literary horizon, until, at last, it burst forth in all its fury in the columns of the *Athenæum*, on the 3d March, 1855; where it took the form of a tripartite letter, given below,* the joint composition of a Mr. George

* I here give this compounded letter entire, as I shall have to analyze it in the sequel, and it is a curiosity in its way; being beautifully illustrative of the remark in the "Critic," that when *conspirators* do agree on the stage—and all the world's a stage—"their unanimity is wonderful." Mr. Skene commences the attack thus:

SCOTT AND "MOREDUN."

Those who have read the narrative of the alleged discovery in Paris of a manuscript romance of Sir Walter Scott, contained in the *Journal des Débats* of the 15th and 27th of December, 1854, will, no doubt, concur with me in denying any authenticity to that work; if I can demonstrate that Miss Anne Scott *never did possess* any such manuscript of her father's; and even had it been otherwise, that no one acquainted with the character and peculiarity of the existing circumstances at the time of Sir Walter Scott, could suppose him capable of making so

INTRODUCTION.

Huntly Gordon, copyist of some of Sir Walter Scott's novels, Mr. James Skene, at whose house

preposterous a use of one of his unpublished manuscripts as he is there stated to have done.

To establish these facts, therefore, I shall have, in the first place, to advert to some circumstances occurring at the time of Sir Walter's involvement in the unexpected failure of Mr. Constable, the publisher of his works. That that catastrophe was an overwhelming surprise to Sir Walter himself, I have good reason to remember, as the day before its announcement to him, he returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford; and, as was his wont on these occasions, dined and passed the evening at my house in his usual light-hearted spirits and gaiety, unaware of the coming evil which awaited his arrival at home. Next morning before daybreak, I was roused by a note from my friend, requesting me immediately to come to him. On reaching his room, I found him immersed among stores of papers, which he had been all night engaged in examining and arranging. He accosted me in these words: "Here I am, Skene, reduced to beggary." "How, and by whom?" I asked, in surprise. "By printers, publishers, and bankrupts, who thus victimize us poor authors. Sad it is: nevertheless, I have but one course, and must now, while life lasts, strive and labor to work myself out of it; and here," pointing to his library table crowded with manuscripts, "is, I think, every scrap of composition or notes I possess; and these shall be forthcoming as speedily as I can manage to prepare and dispose of them in any quarter to lessen this burden." And, accordingly, within the year from that time he managed to throw into the account for the liquidation of the debt from that source alone, about £20,000 sterling, continuing, year after year, with unremitting labor and fidelity, to discharge this sad duty, so long as his much over-worked strength could sustain the effort. He was not the man, therefore, under the pressure of such circumstances, to neglect or divert any of his compositions admitting of profitable use, such as the manuscript in question attributed to his pen, and stated to have been thrown away for a purpose so utterly ridiculous, at a time when claims existed in discharge of which his high sense of honor engaged him to disregard the sacrifice of health and life. Besides, that a distinguished author, jealous as Sir Walter was to a high degree of his literary reputation, should consent to place in the hands of an unknown and seemingly not very sane foreigner, an unpublished work stated to extend to three volumes, which this stranger might dispose of at pleasure, is a tale too preposterous for belief. Of the same incredible character also, is the explanation given in the *Journal des Debats*, how Miss Anne Scott came to be made the medium of this very questionable transaction; and had she been still in life, it is more than improbable that any such scheme would ever have been attempted in the face of her evidence; but, fortunately, an evidence nearly equivalent, exists in that of her near relative, the constant, affectionate, and confidential companion of Miss Scott, from childhood to the close of her life. Sir Walter's niece lived much in the family, and, with reference to the subject in question, writes as follows, of date 17th of February, 1855: "As to the mendacious attempt lately noticed in the newspapers soon after our dear friend Mr. Lockhart was no longer here to contradict and expose it, I know the whole so well to be a fabrication, that I fancied, as my conviction, that the whole world did so too. During the months that I was with my cousin Anne at Abbotsford, immediately before their journey to London and Paris, I am quite certain that she possessed no such manuscript. We were affectionate, and perfectly confidential with each other, shared the same room, and were never apart; and I can recollect conversations which would have led to the circumstance of the manuscript had it existed. On their return from Paris in spring, 1818, I accompanied them from Cheltenham to Scotland, and remained at least a year with them. The visit to Paris was often talked of by Anne, all the people they saw there, and among the rest, Mr. Spenser was spoken of both by uncle Walter and her, but no such thing was ever mentioned as a manuscript having been given to him. The idea of uncle Walter giving away his writings at a period when I know that he was working early and late to forward the then great object of his life—the clearing off the entanglements consequent on Mr. Constable's failure, is quite inconceivable. I have the impression as I write now, as fresh on me as if long years had not slipped away, that, before they went to London and Paris, Mr. Blackwood, the publisher, being at Abbotsford, urged Anne and I to write a story for his *Mag.*, as he called his Magazine; now, if such a manuscript as Anne is supposed to have possessed, had existence, we would certainly have examined it on that occasion—but its absence only certified the proverb, that a 'lie has no feet.'—Again, how could Anne come to be carrying a great manuscript with her on her visit to Paris? It could not have been with

Scott often dined, and a lady who styles the Baronet "Uncle Walter."

any intention of giving it to Mr. Spenser, whom she had never seen, or probably heard of, before that visit, being quite unknown to her. Anne I knew possessed no desk in which such a manuscript might have been lying, and so accidentally taken with her to Paris; she had merely a writing-book when she left home, and she could have had no end or purpose in incurring herself with a voluminous manuscript. So incredible does the story appear to me that, although I ought not to deal in surmises, I can not think that foreigners alone would have ventured on this, and how sad, if any man of real talent, has in any way lent himself to such a purpose."

As to the pretended letter of Sir Walter Scott's accompanying the manuscript, it in no respect resembles his epistolary style; and the clumsy device of substituting the initial W.S. (which he never used), instead of his accustomed signature, only shows that the fabricator wisely avoided trenching on the confines of forgery.

Oxford, Feb. 26.

JAMES SKENE.

On seeing in your columns a note from Mr. Skene, of Rubislaw, expressing some doubts of my existence, I wrote to that amiable and accomplished gentleman, for whose opinions in general, and especially on any matter relating to Sir Walter Scott, I have the highest respect—and received by return of post a delightful answer, in which he tells me he intends writing to you fully on the "Romance of Moredun," and I dare say you will soon hear from him, if you have not already done so. It is strange that the uncertainty as to each other's being numbered among the living was mutual, for some dozen years ago I had heard a false report of Mr. Skene's death.

He was the most cherished and confidential friend of Scott from the year 1796 to his last hour; and, as I doubt not he will conduct it triumphantly, I shall leave to him the argument against the genuineness of these manuscripts from external evidence. Mr. Skene will, I am confident, show how utterly impossible it is that such a stain could be attached to the fair fame of my illustrious friend as would be implied by the mere conjecture (not to say belief) that he had made a gift in 1826, of a tale in three volumes to Mr. Spenser or any other person, just after he had formed the stern resolution of consecrating to the payment of his gigantic debt the profits of every line he had written, or might in future, by the extremest tension of his strong mind, produce. All the world knows (or ought to know) how successfully for the creditors, though fatally for himself, he carried the resolution into effect.

My opinion of "Moredun," however, from the internal evidence of the handwriting may, I hope, be regarded as *ex cathedra*, as I transcribed for the press 34 vols. of Scott's then anonymous writings, down to the first 2 vols. of the "Life of Napoleon," when Scott's avowal of the authorship rendered it no longer necessary to withhold the original manuscript from the hands of the compositors.

I have now seen three pages in fac-simile of "Moredun"—the letter beginning "My dear W. S.," and signed "W. S."—the notice prefixed—and a page from the body of the tale. The first is a very clever *contrefaçon*; but I may remark, parenthetically, that the beginning and end have the least *resemblance*, as Sir Walter never addressed any one by their initials, and, as Mr. Skene truly remarks, never signed his own only. Many of the letters are too tall, and some not formed after Sir Walter's fashion—one, especially, is *always* written in a manner, in which, I am quite certain, there will not be found one example in the numerous manuscripts of the novels and tales now dispersed over the world. This is still more obvious in the page from the tale itself, and is alone quite sufficient to condemn the whole mass of papers: three volumes, which must have cost the real author many a "midnight vigil," as he had set himself the task not only of composing, but of writing, like the dead giant! The little I have seen of the style and sentiments, is not more in accord with Scott's than the writing; for example—it is most improbable that he would have said in a short introduction, "Dante's only object is to interest," for he did not much relish the great Italian, who was too mystical and theological for one of the most picturesque and descriptive of poets. But I shall now leave this strange imposture to share the fate of the volume of letters by Shelley and Byron, which you will remember was some years ago actually printed and published; though that was a far superior *contrefaçon*, even the foreign post-marks on the letters having been imitated *à merveille*!

March 1.

GEORGE HUNTLY GORDON.

Mr. Gordon's *confessions* since, in the same journal, the *Athenaeum*, that both he and Mr. Skene were *stating* that which was not consistent with the truth, I express, as far as I am able, as mild terms as possible, comes too late.—Ed. St. M. G.

The *Athenæum* REFUSED TO INSERT MY REPLY TO THAT LETTER—which would have been a *crime* and *punishable* in France, especially when a copy is not sent to the person attacked, the same as wounding with intent to kill is felony in England. But wicked intents often lead to results unanticipated by their authors. When I penned that answer, Lockhart's Life of Scott was a sealed book to me, and I was content to do little more than express the amusement which the resuscitation of Skene and Gordon afforded me and their coming on the stage side by side in company with a lady to stab *Moredun*; an amusement which was heightened by finding in the romance that a *trio* attempt to strangle *Moredun* himself in his youth, who are not a little surprised afterward to find him alive, and hailed as the son of one of the "giants that were on the earth in those days," nor could I resist hinting to the antitypes of that triple alliance that the "*triumph*" awaiting them may be that of confessing that literary giants may have literary liaisons, unknown to godfathers and godmothers, and children whose names were never heard of by the family gossip, nor recorded in the parish register.

I have said that injustice often overshoots the mark, and confers benefits where it meant to plant injuries. The sweeping nature of the allegations in the letter—the extraordinary course pursued of sending me no copy and then refusing to insert my reply, made me suspicious that it was not exactly *virtuous indignation* which led to such advantage being taken of a foreigner. I went immediately to Galignani's and purchased a copy of their edition of Lockhart's Life of Scott, 4 volumes 8vo., and I now proceed to lay before my readers the result of a most careful, and, I will add, candid examination of every passage in that work which in any way seemed to bear on the subject of this Introduction. Those who follow me through that inquiry will, I think, give me credit for not merely being disposed to forgive my enemies, but for feeling grateful to them, for *driving* me to a work in some degree laborious for a foreigner, but productive, as will be seen, of a mass of evidence *against* those who wish to exclude *Moredun* from the works of the "Author of Waverley," because it had not been produced when Blackwood wanted a story for his "*Mag.*," and because the handwriting of Scott was not the same at every period of his life.

WALTER SCOTT had so many claims to the title of the great Scottish Poet and Novelist, that it is not surprising to find his own countrymen still claiming him as their own peculiar property; as a man who lived for Scotland alone—the child, the petted child—and, as we shall afterward see, the soundly whipped child of that "auld respectit mither" to whom all his acts, all he wrote, all he said, and even all he thought, was supposed to be well known and had become familiar to her as household words.

It is no wonder, then, that even the bare suspicion of that favorite son having had any secrets which he did not reveal to the good, but somewhat crabbed, old lady, should be entertained with great reluctance, if not rejected with scorn; and I was quite prepared to meet, in Scotland, with an obstinacy of incredulity respecting *Moredun*, which nothing but a pe-

rusal of the romance itself could shake or remove.

It was, therefore, with a good deal of astonishment, that, on turning, first of all, to Lockhart's summary of his father-in-law's character, I find him lamenting over "his initiation in the practice of mystery—a thing, at first sight, so alien from the frank, open, generous nature of a man, than whom none ever had or deserved to have more real friends."

I was struck with this; but still more with Mr. Lockhart's reasoning on the subject, which I think illogical, as well as betraying the grossest ignorance of human nature. He says that he "doubts not that what gave Scott, in the hour of his calamities, the bitterest pain, was the feeling of compunction for having kept his heart closed from his friends respecting his literary occupations. These, perhaps, were the written troubles that had been cut deepest into his brain. I think they were, and believe it the more, because it was never acknowledged." As if a man who put all his most self-condemnatory latter-day thoughts in his *diary*, would not have included that, if it had troubled him: and as if Sir Walter Scott had not a judgment far too sound and far too acute, to feel any *compunctions of conscience* for enjoying the *free exercise of his pen*, in order to delight and charm the world by writing *anonymously*!

I must be pardoned for agreeing with the sentiment, expressed by one of the characters in the following work, to the effect that "there is no class of society with which we are less acquainted than with ourselves"—and that I believe the strong view which Mr. Lockhart (who was himself, I understand, a very bitter anonymous writer)—the overstrained view he takes of his father-in-law's *secrecy* in literary affairs, arose from what torments other friends of the author of Waverley—the possibility of any work being in existence of which *they* were not cognizant.

Before, then, proceeding to trace the origin and the effects of this habit on the great Novelist and his works, I would just briefly remark, that as it is acknowledged that *concealment* was habitual to him—as he kept no diary till 1825—and as Lockhart does not give all that private journal, but only such portions as he judged advisable—it follows, that any such sweeping assertion, as that no work can be by the author of Waverley which is not found mentioned in Lockhart's Memoirs of Scott, is worth just as much as the paper it is written upon.

Turning from Lockhart's summary to the narrative itself, the first circumstance which arrested my attention was the early demonstration of a "tale-telling" faculty, and propensity in Scott—the repression of that peculiar talent—its exercise, in private, later in life, and its ultimate development to the public, only when he was "constrained" to acknowledge authorships which *could* no longer be concealed.

Thus I find him in 1786 writing *Romances* in verse "in four books, each containing 400 verses," and then committing them to the flames: and when I inquire into the cause of this, I find it to arise from the severity of the criticism of some friends—who were equally harsh toward his prose essays—and from a diffidence in his own talents, increased, no doubt, by experience-

ing the truth of the saying, that a prophet hath no honor in the little circle around him, who, in their self-conceit, think they see through him.

That severity, which sent the first volume of Waverley into retirement for eight years, was the true cause of the system of concealment which he adopted—a system not merely of secrecy but of denial—for in 1796 he is found averring that he had never written anything beyond sonnets to his mistress' eyebrows, while, ten years before, he had burnt an epic of 1600 stanzas: and further on, in his diary, he says he is ready to give his *affidavit*, if it be necessary, that he is not the "Great Unknown."*

Still his story-telling went on; in the Parliament House and in the walks around Edinburgh; where he was continually either pouring forth the overflowings of his own imagination, or borrowing the tales of others to "put cocked hats on their heads and canes in their hands, in order to make them presentable in company."

Did all the tales he then recounted—did all the imagination which gave them birth, find vent for a space of twenty years in the collection of the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border and in a volume of Descriptive Poetry every two years? Is it credible that such a story-teller, such a lover of ancient lore, who every year, at least, paid a long visit to Perthshire and the classic ground of Macbeth, or to the Border Counties of England and Scotland—and who often, as his "grinder" Weber told Mr. Ellis, had five works in hand at the same time—is it within the range of probability that, among all these works, such an imaginator, such a worshiper of classic ground and picturesque scenery, would be committing no other record to paper of his impressions during these visits than what appears in the "Life!"

We might safely give an answer in the negative to such questions, on the ground of probability alone: but there exists a most singular document in the "Life" itself which *proves* that there was something written—something which never saw the light of publication—and which is never so much as once elsewhere alluded to in Mr. Lockhart's work; for it was written, as we shall see, long before John Gibson Lockhart was made known to the world through the imperti-

nences of *Peter's Letters*. The notice of it is contained in a letter from JAMES BALLANTYNE (Scott's printer, and his greatest confidant) to Miss Edgeworth—written 14th November, 1814—that is, soon after the publication of Waverley; and is in these words—

"I am not authorized to say—but I will not resist my impulse to say—to Miss Edgeworth, that another novel, descriptive of MORE ANCIENT manners still, may be expected ere long from the Author of Waverley. But I request her to observe that I say this in strict confidence."

Now, that such a work must then have been in existence is clear; whereas *Guy Mannering* and the *Antiquary*, which followed *Waverley*, at the interval of a year each, were pictures of more recent manners—not of "more ancient." Romances, descriptive of more ancient manners, afterward appeared; but the periods of the subsequent actual writing of those works are distinctly recorded, and none of them COULD have been the "more ancient" story—the co-existence of which with *Waverley* is borne testimony to by James Ballantyne.

If *More-dun* were that work, why was it laid aside? The answer is to be found partly in the "Life," partly in the letter of W.S. The "Life" says that he soon began to be more than suspected to be the author of Waverley; and his own letter to Morritt adds: "I am not sure it would be considered quite decorous for me, as a Clerk of Session, to write novels. Judges being monks, clerks are a sort of lay brethren, from whom some solemnity of walk and conduct may be expected. So, whatever I may do of this kind, 'I shall whistle it down the wind, and let it prey on fortune.'" If this were the case as a general proposition, how much more when the question was, whether he should venture to publish a work in which there were "a great many anachronisms and freedoms used with persons and places!" He may have contemplated publishing this more ancient story, when he found Waverley popular, and the author unsuspected; but when the *monstrare digito* began toward the Clerk of Session, the readers of *More-dun* will be at no loss to see why that Clerk of Session and "fastidious James" should be afraid of the "freedoms" in that romance, while they will equally well understand, how the freedom of composition resulting from them would give the work "a great charm" in the eyes of the Clerk's daughter. Another reason for its not afterward appearing is this. The "Lord High Constable," who figures rather ignobly in *More-dun*, was a title given by the wicked wags of Blackwood's "*Mag.*" to Scott's publisher—which would, of itself, have precluded its presentation there.

I may here notice, that the water-mark of the paper on which the short preface is written, would indicate a later date (1817 or 1818) as a period when Scott made a present of the MS. of *More-dun* to his daughter; and in February, 1818, there is a scene narrated by Lockhart, as taking place between Miss Scott and her father, in itself, and under circumstances, highly calculated to have brought a tale to his recollection, in which the crown of Scotland was saved from a great and impending danger. Mr. Scott was one of the Commissioners appointed to search for the Scottish Crown Jewels: Miss Scott

* I really can not account for Mr. Lockhart's illogical and vapid reasoning, otherwise than I have stated in the text, when I find, three years after the avowal of the authorship of these novels, Sir Walter Scott writing thus in his general preface to the edition of the Waverley novels with notes: "From the instant I perceived the extreme curiosity manifested on the subject, I felt a secret satisfaction in baffling it." What follows is well worth the second reading of gentlemen like Messrs. Skene and Gordon, who wish the public to think that Sir Walter told them all. "My desire to remain concealed, subjected me occasionally to awkward embarrassments, as it sometimes happened that those who were intimate with me would put the question in direct terms. In this case, only one of three courses could be followed. Either I must have surrendered my secret; or have returned an equivocating answer; or, finally, must have stoutly and boldly denied the fact. The first was a sacrifice which, I conceive, no one had a right to force from me, since I alone was concerned in the matter. The alternative of rendering a doubtful answer, must have left me open to the degrading suspicion that I was not unwilling to assume the merit (if there was any) which I dared not absolutely lay claim to; or those who might think more justly of me, must have received such an equivocal answer as an indirect avowal. I, therefore, considered myself entitled, like an accused person put upon trial, to refuse giving my own evidence to my own conviction, and finally to deny all that could not be proved against me."

was present, with her father, when these long lost-sight-of *Regalia* was found; and partook so largely in his agitation on the occasion, that she turned pale and leaned against the door. He immediately drew her out of the room, and when the air had somewhat recovered her, walked with her across the Mound to Castle Street. "He never spoke all the way home," Miss Scott said, "but every now and then I felt his arm tremble: and from that time he began to treat me more like a woman than a child. I thought he liked me better, too, than he had ever done before."

I wish much the *Diary* had been in existence at that period. I somehow imagine that the scraps of *addenda* and *corrigenda* for Moredun, which I afterward found, with the preface, among the tracts formerly noticed, were written at a time when some such event as that of the search for the *Regalia* had brought it to the author's remembrance, and revived a wish for its publication; but that the old objections had prevailed—and that it was allowed to fall unquestioned into the keeping of his daughter. Those objections, be it observed, were just as strong for keeping its existence a secret from Lockhart, Skene, Gordon, *et id genus omne* as from the world at large. I rather think Miss Anne Scott would have felt a difficulty even in the case of the all-knowing cousin!

Be this as it may, one thing is certain, that, during the early and most active period of Scott's literary life, when unfortunately he kept no diary, there was ample room for various works to have been written, of which no notice ever reached either the public or his friends. He was still, as he says himself, "laboring under the difficulty of believing himself something better than common." His own modesty, his own sound judgment, his own pride—made him diffident of what he wrote: the severity of his intimate friends, most of whom were lawyers, or "wrote themselves," prevented his using perfect openness with them (whatever pains some of them may now take to make the world think otherwise) and his success with the public as an *incognito* writer—all led to a system of entire secrecy in some cases, of partial confidence in others; and it is perfectly clear from these circumstances, and from the whole tenor of his correspondence, that much of what *that hand* wrote, the unceasing rapidity of which, night after night, as sheet after sheet was thrown on the heap, tormented the Hon. William Menzies—who viewed it from an opposite window—that many of those sibylline leaves never saw the light nor were copied by Mr. George Huntly Gordon.

I anticipate that it will be said by this last mentioned gentleman and others—"Well, it is possible, we may grant, for the sake of argument, that it is even probable some work or works may have been written by Scott before his pecuniary involvements became public, which works were not made known at the time of their being written to his friends; but we insist that at the period of the failure of Ballantyne and Co. he was bound and became bound to make, and did make all known."

He gives a brief, but a very expressive answer to this *himself* in his diary—in these words—"This ought sounds to me like must, and must

I can not abide:" and these words are found in his diary *subsequent* to the period when his pseudo-friends say he ought to have laid every scrap of his MSS. at the disposition of his creditors.

But I rest not my reply on these words alone, strong as they are—I find, on investigating his position and his memoranda, much curious information, destructive of the sweeping allegations and *conleur-de-rose bavardage* with which the claimants to his confidence now tinge that period of his checkered career.

The first question which naturally presented itself in that investigation was—who were those creditors, and what did their conduct toward him entitle them to at his hands?

Those creditors were the banks and bill-discounters, into whose hands Ballantyne and Co.'s acceptances, for which Scott was liable, had fallen. Will the literary world on the Continent believe me when I say, that, were I to transcribe from his own diary, the conduct of these banks and bill-holders toward him, they would think I were transcribing a page from the proceedings of the Correctional Police or a chapter from the records of the Inquisition! It is nothing that we find a Jew bill-broking house of London threatening to put him in prison if he went to London on his way to Paris—the "Author of Waverley" was a prize of no every-day occurrence for a class that the law of debtor and creditor in England was framed to protect, and to whom it afforded facilities by making misfortune a felony—but that the banks of Scotland should actually have menaced their "ain Sir Walter Scott" until he was entertaining serious thoughts of taking refuge in the Abbey of Holyrood—is liker a passage in some of his own pictures of the iron age than an incident in the days when gold was at war with bank notes. Nay, this is to state the incident too mildly: it was not merely the Walter Scott who had made Scotland and saved its banks—it was *their own Malachi Malagrother*, their defender against Peel's insane measures—the man whose name and memory will be revered when banks will only be remembered as the promoters of panics and the perturbators of public and private credit—it was he who had too just and too high a sense of his own dignity and proud position to complain openly of the persecution to which he was subjected, but who, in the privacy of his chamber and with his diary before him, deplored the "unequal measure" dealt out to him; "which," in his own words, "if persevered in, would totally destroy any power of fancy, of genius, if it deserves the name, which may remain to me." And he adds, "a man can not work in the House of Correction, and this species of *peine forte et dure* which is threatened would render it impossible for one to help himself or others." Will it be believed that it is Sir Walter Scott who thus writes, and who even adds, "If this great commercial company, through whose hands I have directed so many thousands, think they are right in taking every advantage and giving none, it must be my care to see that they take none but what the law gives them. If they take the sword of the law I must lay hold of the shield."!!!

Will it, I say, be believed, that I am actually transcribing the words of the threatened Author

riety!—of that man of whom his friend said, "Good God, let every man to whom you have given months of delight give him a day, and he will rise to-morrow morning as a Rothschild!"—and that I am witness to the events which occurred not in the regions of rancor, despotism, and oppression, but in Britain—in the land *par excellence* of liberalism, and commercial and literary energy—in the land where a Manchester calico manufacturer had as much subscribed for him, in small instalments, as he had obtained a parliamentary majority in support of a political *dogma*, as he had eased the mind and saved the life of a man whom Europe was proud and England worthy!

Recorded, indeed, that some overtures of peace were made to him. But how! By a messenger direct to himself, in a manner his spirit could not stoop to. Why did not his friends—why did not the government—to the Bank, and place the sum to his credit? Was there no "jingling Georgie" ex-acting all wide England and broad Scotland, enough to go quietly, buy up the bills of the persecutors and put them in the fire! Or, if he were supposed, then, I ask, that Sir Walter Scott, smarting, not merely under the weight of that delicate support which might and have been given him, but actually ex-posed to the threat of persecution—is it not to be imagined that, although he might have been tempted to devote all the energies of his pen to himself from his embarrassments—that he would have been tempted to "get up" a scene such as is described by Mr. Skene! The absurdity strikes every one accustomed to think of that "GREAT AND GOOD MAN," and so justly styles him, battling as he does bravely against the storms of fate.

Let us hear the story in Mr. Skene's own words. He hath set it forth in the *Athenæum* of March, 1856. I am repeating a notice already given in a preceding chapter, but the scene is so effectively got up, that it is worth repetition:

One day before the catastrophe was announced to him, he returned from Abbotsford, and, as was his wont on these occasions, he dined and passed the evening at my house, in his usual light-hearted spirits and unaware of the coming evil which awaited his arrival at home. Next morning, on a rainy day, I was roused by a note from Mr. Skene requesting me immediately to come. On reaching his room, I found him immersed in his stores of papers which he had been night engaged in examining and arranging.

He accosted me in these words—"Here I am, reduced to beggary." "How, and what?" I asked in surprise. "By printers, tradesmen, and bankrupts, who thus victimize me. Sad it is; nevertheless, I have courage, and must now, while life lasts, endeavor to labor to work myself out of it; and to put into my library table crowded with books, 'tis, I think, every scrap of compositions I possess; and these shall be forthwith speedily as I can manage to prepare copies of them in any quarter to lessen their sale.' And, accordingly, etc."

It happens most unfortunately for Mr.

Skene, firstly, that Sir Walter's library table was at Abbotsford, where the library itself was, and not in the study or *den* in Castle Street.

Secondly—That the greater part of his "stores of papers" were at Abbotsford also, and that, therefore, he could not have had "every scollar" lying there and then!

Thirdly—That Mr. Skene knew as well as "his friend," what the "coming evil" was—for bonds had been executed to avert it—and that, therefore, if Mr. Skene said, "How and by whom?" it was a question as *naïve* as it was unnecessary.

Fourthly—That Sir Walter did not know of the "catastrophe" till that morning, and therefore would not have been arranging his "stores of papers all night," even if they had been there to arrange.

Fifthly—That James Ballantyne, who that morning had revealed the catastrophe to Scott, had just gone out from giving the intelligence as Mr. Skene came in, and that, therefore, Sir Walter had not time to have sent him the note before day-break, unless the day break much later in Edinburgh that is indicated in the almanacks: and,

Sixthly—That Mr. Skene himself gave a totally different account of the whole affair to Mr. Lockhart, informing him that the evening before, on leaving his house, Sir Walter had asked him to call next morning on passing to the Parliament House; and that instead of "stores of papers," and the dramatic allusion to them; there was simply the MS. of "Woodstock," on which the baronet was engaged, and no allusion of any kind made to any other work whatever!

That it may be evident that there is no mistake in all this, and that Mr. Skene's different account now from what he gave twenty years ago, respects one and the same scene, I shall here quote the paragraph respecting it from Lockhart's Memoirs of Scott, entire:

"I interrupt, for a moment, Sir Walter's Diary, to introduce a few collateral illustrations of the period embraced in the foregoing chapter. When he returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford on Monday the 16th of January, he found (as we have seen) that Hurst and Co. had dishonored a bill of Constable's; and then proceeded, according to engagement, to dine at Mr. Skene's of Rubialaw. Mr. Skene assures me that he appeared that evening quite in his usual spirits, conversing on whatever topic was started as easily and gayly as if there had been no impending calamity; but at parting, he whispered, 'Skene, I have something to speak to you about; be so good as to look in upon me as you go to the Parliament House to-morrow.' When Skene called in Castle Street, about half-past nine o'clock next morning, he found Scott writing in his study. He rose, and said, 'My friend, give me a shake of your hand—mine is that of a beggar.' He then told him that Ballantyne had just been with him, and that his ruin was certain and complete; explaining, briefly, the nature of his connection with the three houses, whose downfall must that morning be made public. He added, 'Don't fancy I am going to stay at home to brood idly on what can't be helped. I was at work on Woodstock when you came in, and I shall take up the pen the moment I get back from Court. I mean to dis-

with you on Sunday, and hope again then to report progress to some purpose.' When Sunday came, he reported, that, in spite of all the numberless interruptions of meetings and conferences with his partner, the Constables, and men of business—to say nothing of his distressing anxieties on account of his wife and daughter—he had written a chapter of his novel every intervening day."

There are many who will not believe me, but I really am *sorry* to see a gentleman of Mr. Skene's respectability placed in such a *false* position by the contradictory nature of those two statements. I do believe, from all I read of that gentleman in Mr. Lockhart's work, that he would be the very last deliberately to publish one word which he thought to be aside from the truth; but the discrepancy I have here established between two versions of the same story, *both proceeding from himself*, as well as what I *still* have to expose in the tripartite letter, ought to operate as a serious warning to all who *prejudge* a question, and who *tax* their memory to find evidence against that which they do not *wish* to be true.

Mr. Skene is not content to give merely his own unfortunate reminiscences—he brings forward a lady who can speak of "Uncle Walter," and tell the contents of all Miss Anne Scott's trunks and traveling cases as certainly as Mr. Skene could give a catalogue of all the "stores of papers" which were heaped on the library table in Castle Street.

This lady says that, on the return of Sir Walter and his daughter from Paris in the *spring* of 1818, she accompanied them from Cheltenham to Abbotsford, where she remained with them for a year, and that if any MS. had been given to W. S. in Paris she *must* have heard of it.

Supposing the *spring* of 1818 to be a *mistake* for the *winter* of that is November, 1826—a pretty ample allowance for a *lapsus calami* on the part of a lady who comes forward to prove, in language which, with all our free manners on the Continent, we are not exactly accustomed to hear in female society, that "*a lie has no feet*"—it is *too bad* of "Uncle Walter" merely to say in his diary that this lady and her mother "*seemed* in very good health and spirits at Cheltenham" as he and his daughter called on their way home from Paris; it is still worse of him never so much as to mention that she accompanied them to Abbotsford; but the unkindest out of all is to give as a reason for taking, on his return, a furnished house in Edinburgh instead of lodgings, that "he could not leave his daughter ALONE (!) at Abbotsford"—at the very time when this cousin is staying a whole year with them! I leave to Mr. Skene the task of handing this lady off the stage, on which he so imprudently introduced her, and turn to Mr. George Huntly Gordon.

That gentleman comes on the stage in so many different characters that I am fairly at a loss in which I ought first, in his own classical language, to "*do him brown*"—all he does, to quote himself again, is so much "*more than done*," that his appearance can not but make "the judicious grieve." In fact Mr. G. H. G. has made *himself* so eminently ridiculous, that his "*initials*" will remain the laughing-stock of the critical world when *red tape* shall no longer be the

distinguishing mark of genius, and the *stationery* office shall have been moved out of its place.

But let me bear gently on Mr. George Gordon. I will grant him the *loop-holes* of the H.'s to get out at, and I will not say a word about the note he *himself* has signed W. S.* I will forget that he asserted solemnly that Sir Walter *never* signed his initials, and I will be equally oblivious of Mr. Skene having been called in to clinch the assertion;—I will forget all that, for he has himself come forward and made a confession tantamount to this—that the wish had been father to the thought. I will not merely forget, I will forgive all this, for he has, most unwittingly, borne *ex cathedra* testimony to the authenticity of the MSS. in my possession. I never myself placed much weight on the matter of the handwriting—for I never could see that the *merits* of the romance, or the internal testimony it brought with it of being the work of the Great Unknown could in the least degree be affected by the circumstance of it being in the handwriting of Sir Walter himself, or in that of Ballantyne, Weber, Laidlaw, Spencer, or even in that of Gordon, whose memory, we have evidence before us, had been impaired by the 34 volumes which he copied.

Had Mr. Gordon, then, borne testimony that the MSS. were *perfect fac-similes* of Sir Walter Scott's—I would instantly have suspected that they were "*clever contrefaçons*"—and however difficult to imagine or to see the reason why any one should undergo the enormous labor of writing between 300 and 400 pages in this manner—I would have been driven to some such conclusion; *because*, Mr. Lockhart tells us that the "*Ashiesteel fragment*," or autobiography, written by Scott in 1808, is accompanied by notes, *in his own hand also*, added in 1826, and, Mr. Lockhart says, that the two handwritings are "*very different*" from each other—in fact, that his writing changed at different periods of his life—and hence, if the MSS. had been *in all respects* in accordance with those Gordon began to copy for him in 1824, there would have been a strong presumption at least that they were not genuine, or at any rate did not belong to the period to which I have assigned them.

Nor is this the only symptom of their being genuine to which Mr. Gordon unwittingly bears testimony. If they had been the work of a *contrefacteur*, he must have done them from a model or copy before him—and he would have been a wretched hand at his occupation if he had not adhered rigorously to that model. But I can now affirm, on Mr. George Huntly Gordon's own authority, that they are NOT the work of a *contrefacteur*—for they are not the slavish writings of an imitator—but the evidently rapid communications to a paper of the

* It is curious enough, that the only instance of a note so signed by Sir Walter, which is in one of the largest collections of autographs in England, is addressed also to another W. S.—Mr. William Scrope. I do not know if in all that the almost infuriated opposition to *Moredun* has produced, or has been the means of bringing to light, there is any isolated fact so singular as this. It is more than an accidental coincidence. Mr. Gordon unhesitatingly asserted at first, that Sir Walter *never* signed W. S., and the writing was scarcely dry, when he was informed that there was an instance of it in a public collection of autographs, and that exceptional case, as in the case of Spencer, was to another W. S.!

thoughts of one who neither attended to the loop-holes of his h's, nor the length of his capital letters—Manuscripts such as these—extending to upward of 300 pages, so “cleverly” resembling Sir Walter Scott's, and evidently 30, 40, or 50 years old—are they most likely to have been his own in 1802, or an imitator's in 1826? *Moredun* and his readers will answer this question.*

From the handwriting, Mr. Gordon glides to the preface, in which he finds what he thinks unlike Scott, but what I have never yet been able to discover, a quotation from Dante. There is, indeed, a reference to something Scott had met with somewhere which some one had said about that poet. Dante had himself many antipathies; but if Sir Walter Scott would not even have quoted a remark by another referring

* Although the following, which appeared in the *Daily News*, would ascribe a later period for the composition of “*Moredun*” than I have found for it, it is so well sketched that I can not resist quoting it. The writer, I believe, to have been a gentleman who called twice or thrice to examine the MSS., and to whom I have to apologize, if this meets his eye, for not giving him time to read them throughout, there were then so many constantly calling on the same errand.

“With regard to the authenticity of the MS., there can not be two opinions: it is Scott throughout—not to know it, is not to know him. But it is more; it is Scott in his vigor—it is the author of ‘Ivanhoe’ saying to his daughter Anne, for whom the work had always ‘a great charn,’ as well it might—‘Now, Anne, I have been on stilts, because I have been writing for that great monster the public; bring me my slippers, and I shall dash off something for you, my dear daughter—something that, while you are reading it, you will say, “Aye, that’s papa, and no mistake.”’ This is the impression conveyed to me by the part of ‘*Moredun*’ which I have read: it is not merely Scott—it is Scott dramatic; it is Scott writing as the incidents and thoughts come rushing along, with no fears of Lockhart’s superciliousness or Cadell’s causticity to cool his thoughts and freeze his pen.

“Well, then, the authenticity, with us who have seen it and looked into it, being unquestioned and unquestionable, and there being as little doubt that it was given to a W. S. in Paris in 1826, the question remains, how could Sir Walter have done so—or rather, how could he have allowed his daughter Anne to give it away under the then state of his affairs?”

“The letter to W. S. suggests, if it does not absolutely tell the reason. Sir Walter’s sole aim at that time was to raise money—for his creditors and for the preservation of Abbotsford. The vail had been taken off the author of ‘*Waverley*’ by the cruel hands of bankers, and he could now only write with the public looking over his shoulder. That he felt this keenly, is attested by the attempt he made at that time to publish anonymously, as in the instance of the ‘*Bridal of Triermain*.’

“Sir Walter saw an excellent opportunity opening up to him in Paris, of doing what he could not accomplish so successfully on the other side of the water, that is, of writing *sub-umbra*. A certain W. S. (probably the Hon. W. R. Spencer, who called on him, Lockhart says, in his ‘*Life*,’ almost every day in Paris), this W. S. begs hard for a MS. to save a daft man’s life. Scott imagines he sees in W. S. himself the real daft man. ‘Anne,’ he thinks, ‘may give him that MS. of hers—he will be sure to publish it. Nobody will dream of a Paris publication being mine. If it be successful, I will send him more in the same vein, making a bargain with him regarding the proceeds, and thus I shall have an undercurrent at work in supplying which I can write privately, unseen, and at my ease.’

“W. S. gets the MS., gives it to the daft German, hoping, in his turn, that he, being rich, will be at the expense of publishing it. W. S. dies while this negotiation is in progress; the German fails and dies too. The family go away in the midst of revolutionary confusion.

“In a word, the supposition—supported by the very words of the letter—that Sir Walter Scott expected the romance to be published as Spencer’s, renders its history as credible as its authenticity is incontestible; and that this solution should arise, not out of positive affirmation in the documents, but, after much discussion and critical examination, is, to my mind, another proof of that genuineness which all the world will soon, I hope, have an opportunity of bearing testimony to.”

to him, he must have left the author of the *Inferno* far behind him in the art of hating.

I have promised to forget the assertion that Sir Walter Scott never signed his initials, because *that* has been withdrawn—but, having been found untenable in one form, it starts up in another, and now takes the field against the stiff printed shape of the initials at the end of the note to W. S. I shall not stop at present to notice that the evident object of the use of initials in that note being to prevent its being fathered on Walter Scott—should it have fallen into other hands than those for whom it was intended—it is worse than puerile to say that it could not have been written by him, because *he was not in the practice of so printing his initials!* If he *had* been in the practice, it would not have served the evident purpose intended by it. I say I shall not attempt anything so futile as to reason with Mr. Gordon; but I must express my astonishment that the very expression “W. S. printed” did not stay his pen, if the task in which he was engaged did not smite his conscience! I have had many things to write in this introduction which I have tried to soften as much as I could, consistently with the elucidation of the truth; but what language can I find in which to clothe the fact I am now about to record so as to prevent it lowering the critical press of England in the eyes of my own countrymen?

Will it be believed that this Mr. George Huntly Gordon, who has thrust himself forward as the *ex cathedra* authority in all matters relating to the writings of Sir Walter Scott—who tried the lengths of the capitals, the loops of the h's, the size of the paper, the style of the preface, and then the W. S. of the note to give strength to the cry in which he joined, that Sir Walter Scott *could not* have given the MS. to “poor Spencer,” because he had “consecrated to the payment of his debts *every line* he either *had* written or should again write”—that he, George Huntly Gordon, was himself permitted by Sir Walter the year after, to put W. S. to the preface of two sermons written by the author of *Waverley*—and to put the £250 which Colburn gave for them *into his own pocket!*

That my readers may not imagine that I am producing a *pro re nata* incredible tale, I refer them to the IXth Chap. of Lockhart’s fourth volume, where they will find a kind of biographical sketch of this Mr. Gordon and the transaction narrated at full length, including among other documents the following letter to him from Sir W. S.:

“28th December, 1827.

“DEAR GORDON—As I have no money to spare at present, I find it necessary to make a *sacrifice of my own scruples* to relieve you from serious difficulties. The inclosed will entitle you to deal with any respectable bookseller. You must tell the history in your own way as shortly as possible. All that is necessary to say is, that the discourses were written to oblige a young friend. It is understood my name it not to be put on the title-page or blazed at full length in the preface. You may trust that to the newspapers. Pray do not think of returning any thanks about this; it is enough that I know it is likely to serve your purpose. But use the funds arising from this unexpected source with

prudence, for *such* fountains do not spring up at every place of the desert. I am, in haste, ever yours most truly,
WALTER SCOTT."

I question very much if, in all the history of literature or literary controversy any thing to equal this has ever been recorded. An individual under great obligations to Sir Walter Scott, oblivious of all those obligations and *their nature*—his whole soul and mind filled with the fact, repeated every time he comes on the scene, that he had copied 84 volumes of his novels, and anxious to show the public that he had not copied them without observing the lengths of the capitals and the loops of the h's—forgets that a man ought also to attend to his p's and his q's when he comes forward as the accuser of the *absent*, and is ready to make oath that Sir Walter *never did* one thing and *could not do* another—*both* of which he did *for himself*. That Mr. Gordon could really read of his former patron's *scruples* in the case of Spencer, and how the kindness of his heart got the better of them by undervaluing the gift itself—and yet forget that he had a letter *so like* that to Spencer in his own bureau, is a melancholy instance of what Mr. Gordon's covenanting ancestors would have styled "a man being sair left to himself!"

In a letter to Lockhart about the same period Sir Walter says, "Poor Gordon has got my leave" (he does not say that of his creditors) "to make a *kirk* and a *mill* of my *sermons*." Yet this same "poor Gordon," for whom Sir Walter's influence got first one place under government, and then another, until he finally settled in the Stationery office—comes forward to declare the gift to "poor Spencer" a "strange imposture"—because all Scott's writings had been "*consecrated*"—a ceremony much more applicable to *sermons* than to a mere *story*!

When I introduced the triple alliance, I was led to notice their "wonderful unanimity." I might have gone on to the *prayer*, in which the conspirators they imitate ask the "accomplishment of *all* that they desire," and the "sanctification or consecration of *whatever* means they take to gain it"—and I might now finish with the advice given to their prototypes to "go off, *knocking!*" But I assure them, whatever their feelings and that of their friends may be, on reading *the facts* which I have placed in contrast with their reckless assertions, it has given me great pain to have experienced such an inclination, on the part of Sir Walter Scott's countrymen, to exercise toward a foreigner that species of "Jeddart justice" which he has immortalized, and which consists in hanging first and judging afterward.

Having cleared my path by disposing of those who wished to strangle *Moredun* ere he saw the light, I now proceed to consider the circumstances in the history of the MSS.—in the Memoirs of Scott by Lockhart, and in Sir Walter's own account of his early essays in romance writing, which incline me to believe that *Moredun* was the fiction which James Ballantyne led Miss Edgeworth to understand would appear shortly after Waverley—but which *never* was published.

Before I do so, may I be pardoned for saying, in as few words as possible, why I, a foreigner, am so bold as to undertake such a task?

I have already stated, that up to the period when I read such of the fierce attacks as came in my way, with which I was assailed in England when I made known the existence of the MSS.—I was as ignorant as the generality of my countrymen, of every particular in the personal or literary life of the great Scottish Novelist which could in the smallest degree guide me in replying to those attacks. But my profession is that of *Biographer*—in which department of literature I have already published more than Sir Walter Scott ever gave to the world either as *Biographer* or *Historian*: and as these Biographical notices* respect, for the most part, those of whom no memoirs have previously been published, and for which materials are sent to me from every country in Europe—it follows that the translation and examination of MSS.—the collecting and the sifting of evidence, being my profession, has become habitual and easy to me. I give *my whole mind* for the time to the life of the individual, whose family records I have to arrange and digest: and, now, applying the same *modus operandi* to the memoirs and memoranda of Scott lying before me, I ask my readers to form a candid judgment on a summary of what I have found in the course of that examination.

I have found, then, Sir Walter Scott, from his youth, a desultory reader and a great *story-teller*. Brought up among clever and critical relations and friends, and constantly in the society of shrewd practitioners in the Scottish law courts and at the Scottish bar, he was exposed to so much friendly as well as severe criticism—to that species of badinage which is known in England under the name of *quizzing*—that he was early driven to habits of concealment; and he was between thirty and forty years of age ere he pleaded guilty to authorship, and appeared before the world as the collector, compiler, editor and annotator of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Three years afterward he published his earliest, and, in the opinion of many, his finest poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Two years later he was employed by Mr. Murray, of Albemarle Street, to finish the romance of *Queen-Hoo-Hall*, which STRUTT, the Antiquary, had left unfinished; and this concluding chapter was his first appearance in public as a romancist.

To his connection with *Queen-Hoo-Hall*, and his remarks on it, I wish particularly to direct attention.

That romance was unsuccessful; which its editor and completer attributed to its *antiquarian* character—to the prolixity of the details, and to the too ancient style of its diction; and

* In the course of those biographic inquiries, I have not unfrequently met with circumstances which led me to conclusions very different from the current opinions held both in regard to individuals and to public events. Of these, an instance is given in a work entitled "*Etude Historique sur la Capitulation de Baylen en 1808, précédée d'une notice Biographique sur le Lieut.-General Comte Dupont*," which may be seen at Messrs. Low, Son, and Co., 47, Ludgate Hill, London. The conviction that General Dupont had been misrepresented in that affair, led me to undertake that work on my own responsibility. If the readers of this Introduction consider the nature of the attacks, to which I have referred in the text, they will pardon me for adducing this proof that the vindication of the *truth* in opposition to popular clamor and interested misrepresentation, is demanded of me alike by my official position and the nature of my literary occupations.—E. DE ST. M. C.

in his General Preface to the Edition of the *Waverley Novels* with notes, he adds this remark, "I conceived it possible to avoid this error; and by rendering a similar work more light and obvious to general comprehension, to escape the rock on which my predecessor was shipwrecked."

It can not for a moment be supposed that the little trifling "Fragment of a Romance which was to have been entitled *Thomas the Rhymer*" answers to such a "conception" as this:—that fragment was, evidently, from his own account, an earlier and a very juvenile conception. Neither will *Waverley* reply to the demands of such an idea of a romance—although Sir Walter apparently introduces it as resulting from his cogitations on that subject.

In a word, it is my thorough conviction, that there is not one who has examined Sir Walter Scott's literary career with attention, who has risen from that examination without feeling that between the year 1800 and 1814, when *Waverley* appeared—there is a void, a hiatus—a something wanting, which neither he himself nor any of his biographers or commentators have ever satisfactorily supplied: and when, as we have already seen, James Ballantyne, his confidential printer, promised a romance of the description we are now in search of, immediately to follow *Waverley*—a Romance which did not afterward appear—I would not believe in the non-existence of such a work of fiction were all the Gordons in Scotland, with their *Skene*-*dhuss* at their side, to assert the contrary.

Some author has written a tale to illustrate the apothegm, that "there is a skeleton in every household"—a chamber, the key of which is never given even to "the friend of the family." If this be the case in household affairs, how much more so are we entitled to adopt it as a principle in accounting for the blanks which occur in the life of an author habituated to concealment, and absolutely, as he afterward describes, deriving one of his greatest enjoyments from the exercise of it!—an author, who at one time had actually begun the composition of a series of letters imitative of, and intended to be ushered into the world as having been written in, the seventeenth century!

Even then, had no such manuscript as "*More-dun*" come into my hands, answering in every respect to the idea Scott had formed in his own mind of a romance of ancient times, written freely, rapidly, boldly, and aiming neither at historical exactitude nor minuteness of antiquarian description—I would never have hesitated a moment, after reading all the particulars of his life from 1800 to 1814—to say that there must have existed some manuscripts of that period which he never had brought to light; and that in giving "*Thomas the Rhymer*" as a specimen of them, he, then the avowed author of "*Waverley*," was still enjoying his old pastime of laughing in his sleeve at those around him, who fancied they knew all the haunts of that noble king of the forest, whom the toils of mercantile misfortunes had thrown bound into their hands. I will not except from this even his "literary executor," Mr. Lockhart, who, artificial and supercilious, and who, according to the notices of him which appeared in the English papers in December last, never gained a friend—was

not the man to be taken to "the heart of hearts" of the brave, honest, and kindly Old Peveril of the Peak!

After what I have already adduced, it would be wasting the time and wearing out the patience of my readers, were I to insist farther here on the perfect freedom which Sir Walter Scott felt himself entitled to use in regard to the productions of his pen, even after the arrangements entered into with his creditors. The following entry is so curious, however, that I must not pass it over: it is one, among many, in which we see that any attempt to fetter him in respect to his literary freedom, made him instantly take up "*the buckler*."

"I am not very anxious to get on with "*Woodstock*. For an unfinished work they must treat with the author. It is the old story of the varnish spread over the picture, which nothing but the artist's own hand could remove. A finished work might be seized under some legal PRE-TENSE!"

Are these words of him who paraded every morsel of his writings before Mr. Skene, and "consecrated" them to his persecuting creditors? Credat Judeus, non ego. The Jew bill-brokers might believe so—not I.

With these feelings in respect to his writings (and if he felt thus in regard to those actually in his own repertoires, what must have been his legal or moral views in regard to any of which his daughter may have for some time "possessed herself?") he came, that is, he was allowed by the Jews to come in 1826 to Paris, to collect materials for his "*Life of Napoleon*;" and there we find from his diary one day after another, "*poor Spencer*" coming to breakfast with him; that Spencer, to whom he, the following year, makes this affecting reference on a day when he was

"Assorting papers and so forth. I never could help admiring the concatenation between Aithophel's setting his house in order and hanging himself. The one seems to follow the other as a matter of course. But what frightens and disgusts me, is those fearful letters from those who have been long dead, to those who linger on their wayfare through the valley of tears. Those fine lines of Spencer came into my head:

"The shade of youthful hope is there
That lingered long, and latest died;
Ambition all dissolved to air,
With phantom honors by his side.

"What empty shadows glimmer nigh!
They once were Friendship, Truth, and Love!
Oh! die to thought, to memory die,
Since lifeless to my heart ye prove."

Ay, and can I forget the author, the frightful moral of his own vision!"

And Lockhart has this note—

"The late Hon. W. R. Spencer, the best writer of *vers de société* in our time, and one of the most charming of companions, was exactly Sir Walter's contemporary, and, like him, first attracted notice by a version of Burger's "*Lenore*." Like him, too, this remarkable man fell into pecuniary distress in the disastrous year 1825."

To this I may add, that M. Amedé Pichot, director of the *Revue Britannique*, writes to me on the 17th February last, that he remembers Mr. Spencer well, and of being introduced to him in the Windsor Hotel, at Paris, by Sir Walter Scott, as his intimate and esteemed friend

Of all those particulars I was entirely ignorant when I received the MS. of "*Moredun*," and published my account of the discovery. I can now see a very plain and obvious solution of the whole affair.

Sir Walter Scott sees his old and esteemed friend, contemporary, and brother poet, at Paris, in great pecuniary distress. His kind-hearted daughter bethinks herself of the *interdicted* manuscript, and her father allows it to be given—not *expressly* for publication—but with a very plain *hint* of such an expectation; and seeing in such an event the *trial* of his early "story-telling" with the public without compromising himself; a trial, which, if so successful as to encourage him to follow it up, would open up a new source of revenue for his creditors as well as for himself. To call this, as some hypercritics and would-be friends have styled it, the act of a *swindler*, is to confound right with wrong through an over-zeal to prejudice "*Moredun*" and to prejudice the public mind—it is to *overstrain* right, as the devil did the holy parchment until it gave way and the overstrainer cracked his head against the wall.

But those who are adepts at *pro re nata* reminiscences are, as a matter of course, mistrustful of the good faith of others; and they will allege that I knew all this but kept it back at the time of publishing my account of the discovery—as if I could have been so blind to my own interest!

Well! at all events I did not know until a few days since, when the fact was mentioned in the London papers, by Mr. George Huntly Gordon—that Mr. Spencer and Sir Walter Scott corresponded. There is not a letter interchanged between them in all the "*Memoirs*."

Now, gentlemen, I turn upon you and I ask, WHERE ARE THOSE LETTERS? AND WHY DID MR. LOCKHART WITHHOLD THEM?

That they were "few and far between," as Mr. Gordon wishes to insinuate (himself merely a copyist, and not likely to be intrusted with all Sir Walter's private correspondence)—that they were not many, is nothing to the point. Here we have a *kindred spirit*, in like depressed circumstances with the persecuted Scottish Poet and novelist himself—one whose verses *before they were published* (they are cited in 1827—published in 1835) were familiar to him—whose memory and misery were ever present to him—here we now have it borne testimony to, that those two remarkable men corresponded—yet there is not a scrap of a letter produced in the *Memoirs*. There are pages given in it to the affairs of the copyist, with six letters from Sir Walter to him—and yet of *this* person, so different from Mr. G. H. G., for he was a "*remarkable man*"—there it not a letter produced.

If those letters were withheld or destroyed either before Mr. Lockhart became literary executor or afterward—Why?

With all that I have produced, bearing collaterally on the manuscripts and damnatory on their assailants, I might well pause here until this question be answered, and the suspicions it gives rise to removed; but I have not yet brought forward with sufficient prominence the entries in the *Diary* which relate to Mr. Spencer during Sir Walter's visit to Paris, nor some

notices in the same record of a very curious nature which occur just as he was setting out on that journey. With them, and they will not detain the reader long, my task will be finished.

It appears, then, by the *Diary*, that Mr. Spencer breakfasted with Sir Walter and his Daughter on the 2d November, when there is this remarkable entry:

"I expect poor Spencer to breakfast. There is another thought which depresses me."

On the day following, 3d November, Spencer again breakfasted with them.

The letter to Spenceer is dated the following day, 4th November—on which day Sir Walter did a very anomalous thing with him while in Paris, he "stayed at home on *Anne's* account."

If there be any who, after reading carefully the letter written on that day and considering the nature of its contents, can possibly expect an entry of it in the *Diary*—let them read what follows;—the answer it gives to their inquiry is in these terms:

"November 5. I believe I must give up my journal till I leave Paris!"

These entries might have been considered commonplace if they had stood alone; but I ask of the candid reader, who has duly weighed the many singular circumstances I have brought forward, last of all to turn with me to two very curious entries in his *Diary*—the one just before leaving Abbotsford for Paris, and the other while in London on his way thither.

He makes this entry at Abbotsford—"I have a curious fancy. I will go set two or three acorns and judge by their success in growing."

I need not here remind my readers of that vein of superstition in Sir Walter Scott's mind, which he held in common with Dr. Johnson and many other illustrious men, in order to call their attention to this curious act of *divination*, done in private, and so significative of the tendency of his thoughts at the time toward *incognito* undertakings: but he himself gives it a most distinct elucidation when so soon after—that is just before leaving London for Paris—he follows it with these words; "I am considering, like a fox at his shifts, whether there be any way to dodge them—some new device to throw them off and have a mile or two of free ground while I have legs and wind left to use it. There is one way. To give novelty: to depend for success on the interest of a well-contrived story!—to make the world stare and gain a new march ahead of them all! Well. SOMETHING WE STILL WILL DO.

"Liberty's in every blow,
Let us do or die!"

Is this romance of *Moredun*, which it has fallen to my lot to usher into the world—is it one of those "*acorns*," which Sir Walter planted in private—is it one of those "*somethings*" which the intolerable feeling of writing "in the House of Correction"—his creditors standing at the doors, and the public looking in at the windows—Cadell at his side with a sithe to cut out the leaves as they were written, and a porter from the bank turning the hour-glass—is it one of the ways he devised "to make the world stare," and in which, had his life been spared, he would certainly have "gained a new march ahead of them all," or is it a "clever contrivance" by

ser of one of those "acorns!" The latter position is too absurd.

One thing is clear, that if Sir Walter Scott, instead of "aspiring to the character of historian" in which on the Continent at least he did neither fame nor honor, and in aspiring to it, the labor—the life of a *forçat* laborer in chains—the mental and the bodily travail which it cost—soon carried him to the grave instead of that, he had amused himself with writing out the original idea which gave birth to the following "tale"—that of easy recital, in a history gives merely the *text*, his own unaided imagination the *Sermon*—he might have lived to a good old age, "pointing his morals and adorning his tales"—introducing his *Adam Pissions* and his *Tam Purdies* in all their humor—paying his debts in the same manner in which he contracted them—that *The Great Unknown*."

His task—that of clearing the way for the necessity of "the Knight of Moredun" into the (selling) *lists*, has been attended with more success and has occupied me longer than I anticipated—having had so many *gamins* to drive off the way who are always found on such occasions disturbing the public peace and obstructing the literary thoroughfares.

It would be too much to expect that those who have encouraged these idlers in their mischief will readily acknowledge the high birth and lineage of the chevalier who now enters—and who has desired the heralds to proclaim him, not so much on account of his own actions as on account of his imitating his predecessors in the lists as a proclaimer of the approach of other and higher personages: but I observe one on the field who will be no unconcerned spectator—and I venture to foretell, that he, the "*Showman*" in Blackwood, will be constrained to confess, that if the vivid scenes which succeed each other so rapidly in the following pages, can not be sworn to as *al fresco* sketches of the Great Master—he has had no such *tableaux vivants* to exhibit since Wilson left the Lakes, and the Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life were lost in the darkness of the tomb.

E. DE SAINT MAURICE CABANY,

Proprietor of "*Moredun*,"
Directeur Général de la Société des Archivistes de
France,
Directeur Rédacteur en chef du Nécrologe
Universel du XIX^e siècle,
Boulevard Beaumarchais, No. 91.

PARIS, 15th April, 1855.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I HAVE somewhere met with the remark, that "Dante's only object is to interest;" such has been my aim, in that to which I have, on that account, given the name of a Tale, rather than claim for it the title of a Romance; and if, as has been said of his poetry, it can be said of this Tale, that the interest never flags, my main object, besides that of turning to it as a recreation, will have been gained.

If any apology be necessary for the neglect of the unities of time and place in such a narrative, I can quote the authority of Dr. Johnson, who justifies the want of them in much higher productions. I may likewise quote the same illustrious writer for a justification of many departures from the rules of criticism, and say with him, "that there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature."^{*}

^{*} There is neither title nor date to this Preface in the original MS.; but the paper bears the water-mark of HORNE, 1817.

MORE DUN:

A TALE OF THE TWELVE HUNDRED AND TEN.

CHAPTER I.

THE INUNDATION.

THE esplanade in front of the palace of the
of Scotland, at Scone, was thickly covered
the snow, through which a pathway had
cleared; and along it a stately figure was
pacing, with measured steps, under the
light of a full but hazy moon. He looked
usly, alternately at the sky and at the in-
fect landscape, which was encircled in the
ace by the shadowy forms of the Grampian
tains. All lay in the iron grasp of winter
seless and actionless as a whitened tomb.

the strong and rapid river reposed ice-
d—scarcely distinguishable from the undu-
g grounds around; and on every side the
stonous firs hung their overloaded branch-
if mourning over a departed friend. With
is appearance of winter, there was at the
time an unnatural oppression in the at-
here, almost a warmth, which added to the
g of sadness conveyed by the silence, soli-
and sameness of the scene.

ddenly this silence was broken by a sullen
l along the bed of the river, at first fitful
fifty, but gradually increasing in inten-
until it seemed as if the mightiest trees in
ljoining forest were cut asunder and hurled
ant hands along its surface. As the Scot-
nonarch leant over the parapet and looked
a direction of the river—it was WILLIAM
ion who thus kept solitary watch on the
rm of his palace—the broad surface of the
which then lay within a short distance of
terior parapet of the esplanade, seemed
ally to rise, then break into masses, which
gainst each other, like the fabulous mon-
of the deep, or were hurled among the
on the bank, crushing the underwood,
napping the weaker denizens of the thick
tions.

e king had not continued long to regard
trange and wild havoc, when a rumor, as
tant thunder, came in the direction of the
ite shore, where a ravine broke in upon
ine of the copsewood which edged the
at Green Forest" of Scotland, followed
rushing sound as of many waters, which,
in the distance, was heard above the
g of the ice on the river. It drew

nearer and nearer, until a heavy mass was seen
towering over the line of the horizon in that
direction, and, with a terrific noise, enormous
blocks of ice were launched into the bed of the
Tay, impelled by a torrent through a ravine
where nothing but a mountain-rivulet had ever
passed before. Such was the force with which
they were driven, that many splinters of the
ice were thrown upon the esplanade, and the
turbulent waters were forced for a moment up-
ward to the very verge of the parapet. For a
brief space the king relinquished his position
against the wall; but soon returning, he re-
sumed his contemplation of the conflict which
raged now almost at his very feet. The men-
at-arms, body-guards, and domestics had rushed
out of the palace and stood at a respectful dis-
tance on the platform, surveying in silence and
in fear the tempestuous and appalling scene;
and so rapt were they, as they thus gazed, that
the bell of the portal of the palace rang thrice
ere any of them obeyed its summons.

As the heavy gate creaked on its hinges, the
sound of horses' hoofs was heard clattering in
the court-yard, and immediately afterward a
knight advanced on the platform toward the
king. Without any of the usual formalities,
and ere he had reached the spot where the king
still reclined over the wall, he called out in
hurried accents—

"The queen, your Majesty, the queen!—the
river! She calls for your royal arm to succor
her."

Starting from his recumbent position, the
king advanced rapidly to the knight, placed his
hand on his shoulder, but uttered not a word—
so deep was the agitation and anxiety expressed
in his countenance. The knight instantly re-
plied to that inquiring look—

"The bridge, your Majesty, is in danger; and
the palace is surrounded by the waters and ice
—none dare approach it. The queen, from the
windows, calls upon the king."

Without a moment's delay, and without ut-
tering a word, the king passed into the hall of
the palace, buckled on a cuirass, placed the
helmet on his head, surmounted by the gilded
figure of the lion, from which he derived his sur-
name, and, passing into the court-yard, mounted
one of the horses belonging to the party who
had just arrived. At the utmost speed which

the encumbered state of the road would permit, and followed by two of the three knights who had conveyed the message from Perth to Scone, and by others who joined them on the way, he soon arrived at the bridge, which was of wood, and at that time communicated in a direct line with the main street of the town. Passing under the massive archway and towers which guarded the eastern access, he advanced along the bridge without relaxing his speed, looking anxiously toward the palace which stood at the entrance to the town, in a line with the Chapel of the Virgin. He had nearly reached the gate which led up between these two buildings to the High Street, when his passage was suddenly interrupted by huge masses of ice, which, the bridge being there considerably lower than at the other end, had been borne up over it by the rising tide. The queen had left the window of the palace from whence she had previously called for aid, and the whole building lay dark and deep in the shade—its picturesque towers alone fringed by the pale light of the moon behind them.

The king could now, for the first time, contemplate the extraordinary scene before him. The thaw had come on with unwonted rapidity, just as the tide had nearly reached its flow; and the thick crust on the river broke up, at and above the town, ere it gave way at two narrow gullies formed by an island lower down the river. The ice below, borne up by the ocean wave, sent back the water swelled by a descending current loaded with sheets of ice, of a magnitude and weight sufficient to have borne away the bridge before them, had they not been kept in check by the opposing tide. Thus the agglomerated mass of ice was forced up, and the waters with it, above the walls of the town in many places, and over the part of the bridge at which the passage of the king was stopped. In the lower parts of the town the inundation reached to the eaves of some of the humbler houses, filled with few exceptions the narrow streets, and hid the first and in some cases even the second stories of the higher habitations, among which was the palace itself. To the south and west the town resembled the fantastic rocks of the Simplon rising out of the glaciers, and lighted up here and there by the torches of exploring travelers; to the north, far as the eye could reach, an icy lake carried on its surface myriads of white and ever-changing glacial groups, to which the soft light lent the strangest and most unearthly forms. Here and there, where torches were carried, their lurid gleams contrasted singularly with the silvery subdued light of the moon, and added to the wildness and terrors of a night which the then capital of Scotland carried long in its remembrance.

The king was turning to address some words to the knights of his suite, when he observed a light at one of the windows of the palace, on a level with the ice, and a boat steering its way *with difficulty* among the blocks toward it. Soon

the queen made her appearance at the casement, carrying an infant in her arms. She was not long in observing the king, and, uttering a loud cry, took off her white coif and waved it in joyful recognition.

The boat was now right under and close to the window, and its sole occupant had stretched out his arms and received in them the infant which the queen placed there, as she herself rose on the sill, preparing to step into the boat, when, suddenly, the water and ice sank, the frail bark was upset, and the man with the child disappeared: the scream which arose from the palace, and from the roofs and windows around, thronged with the people, sank into the heart of the king, who had but imperfectly witnessed the appalling scene.

But the point of interest was changed—it was the bridge and not the palace which was now in danger, and to it all eyes were directed. The sudden subsiding of the waters had been occasioned by the ice giving way farther down the river; and the pent-up waters and ice, as if maddened by their recent confinement, rushed furiously toward the opening, crashing against each other, and crushing before them every impediment. If the scene had hitherto been solemn and imposing, it was now fearful. For a minute, the western end of the bridge, whither the current was directed, hesitated to give way; but the force of the waters and weight of the ice were too great for it—it writhed under its burden, and was torn off into the abyss to within a few feet of where the king stood. It was remarked at that moment, that, while the rest of the suite turned their horses and fled toward the eastern gate, the young knight who had borne the message to the king at Scone, spurred his steed on toward the king, whose horse he turned, and both directed their course eastward. But they had not advanced many paces, when a new current setting in toward the eastern gate, carried off the supports of the bridge there, and the royal suite, which had been increased to nearly twenty on the way from Scone, were precipitated into the flood—all excepting one, whose horse had attained the gate at the moment when the bridge had given way.

The situation of the king and his companions was now most perilous. Cut off from all communication with the land on both sides, the portion of the bridge on which they stood was certain to give way the instant that the currents, which were momentarily widening, should meet, and set those blocks of ice in motion; which, for the time, were kept in check by the island in the middle of the river a little farther down than the bridge. The presence of mind of the young knight saved himself and his royal master, for a brief space of time at least, from the impending danger.

Pointing out to the king the cause why the central masses, though gradually sinking, still remained in their original relative position, he persuaded him to dismount and to leave their horses on the remnant of the bridge. Then de-

ascending, by one of the slanting supports, followed by the king, he, with the aid of a short lance which he had taken from the saddle-bow, and the king with a pole-ax which fortunately had formed part of the harnessing of his steed, fought their way with difficulty, through and over the glaciers, until they reached the northern point of the little island, where a high bank was now beginning to appear above the water line.

A joyful shout rose from either shore as the monarch and his companion stood erect there; but it was quickly changed into a note of wail, for, almost at the same moment, the remnant of the bridge gave way, and the full force of the broad river came down, bearing masses of ice with it, many of which surmounted the spot on which the king and the knight had been seen, who were now given up for lost by the anxious crowds. Immediately afterward, too, the overflowing of a tributary river, the Almond, which the king had witnessed at Scone, forcing an unnatural channel opposite the palace, but which had been stayed in its course by an intervening island—now came down, the blocks of ice mingled with the trees and underwood which it had torn away in its fury. What the Tay alone had left undone, the united streams completed; and the sound of falling walls and fences, the wailing of the sufferers, and the shouts of the survivors, in their attempts to save the friends within their reach, united to the roar of the waters, and the crashing of the blocks of ice, formed altogether a scene of such overwhelming terror, that many died that night through fear, who escaped unhurt alike the billows and the glaciers.

As those who had been watching what had passed on the island, now either wound their way homeward, at points where access to the town was practicable, in deep sorrow as well as dread—or stood dejected, on the banks of the river, watching its gradually subsiding tumult—it was observed that the narrowest of the two branches which encircled the island became again obstructed; and soon the blocks of ice were so firmly joined together there, that some of the boldest began to talk of essaying a passage to the top of the island where the king and the knight had disappeared. While the question was under discussion, a strong young man, armed with a long stout pole, set himself to the task, in the midst of the most breathless anxiety on the part of all the spectators. He was often lost to view by the projecting angles of the icebergs; but at last he was seen to attain the highest point of the island, where he stood for a few moments, hesitating where to turn or to direct his researches. Suddenly he stooped down as if in the attitude of listening; from which posture quickly raising himself, he shouted to those on shore—

“To the rescue, to the rescue! the king! the king!”

Many obeyed the summons, although few were able, even after a long and toilsome effort,

to reach the spot where the young man stood. He had, unassisted, removed several of the lighter obstructions, and when assistance arrived, and the heavier blocks were raised, the king and his companion were found, under a sort of arch formed by the trunks of trees and icy blocks, safe and unhurt.

Their almost, or, as it was then considered, altogether miraculous escape, is thus accounted for. At the northern extremity of the island there had formerly been a strong piece of masonry, serving either for a breakwater or for the base of a watch-tower. Tradition had given it a Roman origin. At the instant when the young knight observed the fall of the last remnant of the bridge, and the rapid approach of the accumulated torrent, he seized the king by the arm, and both leaped together into the chasm, the depth of which, in the obscurity, it was impossible to surmise. But that was no time for ceremony or surmises; the moment their feet touched the ground, a huge body of debris, made up of trunks of trees, underwood, and ice, was thrust over the opening of the pit by the force of the waters, and that which would have been their destruction had proved their protection.

It were vain to paint the exuberant joy of the succoring party on seeing their beloved monarch once more in safety; the king himself, although not wanting in expressions of thanks to his deliverers, among whom he carefully singled out the first who had essayed the path of danger, was pensive and abstracted. Thoughts of the queen and what he had witnessed at the palace, now more fully explained to him, preyed upon his mind. Arrived at the eastern bank, scouts were sent in all directions to see where the river could be crossed; and ascertaining, ere long, that the current at the other side of the island was also obstructed, he retraced his steps to the scene of his former danger, and from thence to the opposite bank, after much toil and no little risk, accompanied only by the young knight and the horseman who had escaped the fall of the eastern portion of the bridge. Their motions had been anxiously watched, and horses were there awaiting them, so that, ere long, they were in the town and advancing to the palace through the Water Street.

They found the inhabitants beginning to recover from the state of alarm into which they had been thrown even in that the highest part of the town. As they advanced, they met with new proofs of the real attachment of the people to their chief; and, even at that period, of the good sense which forms a trait so prominent in the Scottish character. There was no noise, no shouting, no unseemly exclamations. The old men took off their bonnets, held them to their breasts, and knelt as if in prayer—the young men placed one hand on the shoulder of their sires, and stretched out the other toward heaven; the elderly females said—“God bless him!” and the younger did him reverence. King William was a stern warrior in the field, as many

an English knight had felt; but never a sovereign wore a crown who possessed more of those warm qualities of the heart which form the character of the fond husband, of the kind father, of the firm friend, of the merciful monarch. William's heart was full—he could only look his thanks.

As the king and the two knights turned the corner of the Water Street, where a considerable crowd was collected, the younger of the two cavaliers, he who had been the companion of the king's dangers, was startled by a rough-looking man in a sailor's dress, leaping over the crupper of his horse, as if to escape the pressure of those behind, and almost whispering as he vaulted past, "the Lady at Scone." He was at first startled and in some degree alarmed; but the next moment he regarded it as one of those foolish pasquils, which the populace sometimes indulge in, to mark that they are not inattentive observers of the liaisons of the court. He had not much time to think of it, for they were now approaching the palace, where the ravages of the flood were apparent on every side, and the water remained so deep on the street that it touched their horse-girths ere entering the royal gateway.

The meeting of the monarch and his consort Ermengard was deeply affecting; their own danger, the loss of their youngest child, the loss of life and property to their subjects—all contributed to mingle much sadness with the joy of being once more in each other's embrace, and gave solemnity and sadness to the touching scene.

The morning now began to dawn, drizzly and dull; and lights, streaming from the windows of the Chapel of the Virgin, indicated that the monks, undeterred, or rather impressed by the events of the night, were preparing to celebrate their matins with unwonted solemnity. The royal pair—as eminent for their piety as for their blameless life—were desirous to join in a thank-offering for the escape of the king; and by beams, laid from the lower windows of the palace to the basement of the bridge-gate, and from thence to the door of the chapel, means of access were afforded from the palace, while a boat conveyed across such of the citizens as were desirous to join in the ceremony.

The Chapel of the Virgin was a small building, simple and severe in its style of architecture, but not without claims to considerable taste and beauty in its interior arrangements. The pillars were small and light in form, but grouped with great taste; and were sufficiently numerous to form a nave of some extent, the roof of which was pointed and richly groined. The tapers on the altar at the eastern end afforded the only light—the dawn being too weak to lend them any perceptible aid, and thus the unity of the general effect was as striking, as the occasion which drew so many worshippers together was solemn and impressive. As the royal pair advanced to the altar and prostrated themselves, while the choir of monks, joined

by the abbess and a company of nuns from Cistercian monastery, awoke on high the of the vaulted roof with the sublime notes *Te Deum*, the whole assembly fell on their knees and united with the music the sobs of sore hearts and over-excited imaginations.

Among those who knelt not, but who ing against the pillars, manifested a full cipation in the religious feelings of the m were the two knights who had accompan king from Scone—the one who had be companion of his danger, and the other w escaped by a hairbreadth the fall of the Both had laid aside their helmets, a features of each were distinctly visible. younger was fair—almost to a feminine of manly beauty; but his countenance ha expression of firmness and valor, and h was more that of the young Hercules t Antinous or Apollo. In this respect h companion resembled him, but his countenan darker and less frank in its expression; however, eminently handsome; and all th of Scottish chivalry might have been se in vain for two finer or nobler-looking warriors.

Somewhat in advance of these two ca two individuals leant over a richly-carve *Dies*, very different in their appearance fr two soldiers. They wore each long m but the one had a rich chain of gold passed over his shoulders, and to which cross of the same metal was appended ir while the other was destitute of all s nament. The one was William de Bos chancellor of the kingdom; and the seco lan de Galway, the high constable. Th and beard of the former were ample and as snow; the hair of the latter dark and his beard pointed and somewhat grizzly. four formed the sole retinue of the king. long-continued snow-storm had interr communication throughout the whole k and those alone of all William the Lion's cilsors were with him at this time who w ways in attendance on the royal person.

The younger knight, while shading h with his helmet, during a part of the s was again startled by hearing, as if so out of the helmet itself, the same refere the lady at Scone which had been made corner of the street. He turned quick saw the same vulgar-looking man emerg behind the cluster of pillars at his back keeping close to the wall, glide out at the He was now seriously annoyed, and instin looked toward his companion in arms w leaning against the parallel group of cc at the opposite side of the chapel. The tigation was not very satisfactory, for the glances of the dark knight directe same mysterious individual, with an e which he could not read, but which h less on that account dislike. His d feelings were now entirely upset, and it an irrepressible degree of irritation, at

liness both of present gratitude, and of ngers, that he listened to the words and rough the forms, without one portion of addressing his understanding or touching rt.

matins being concluded, the crowd went fully to their homes, or to survey the of the inundation; while the four per- whom we have briefly sketched, following to the palace, where the two elder s councilors, and the two younger stood o execute the royal commands.

of the first commissions given them, was ey intelligence of the escape of his Ma- s Scone; but the state of the river, which w entirely open and coming down in a nd rapid current, surcharged with blocks and debris of every kind, forbade any nication with the opposite bank; and 7 passed without any intelligence being ad between the two royal residences. In se of making these attempts, it was dis- l that the river Almond, which formerly l itself into the Tay, at and around the ad forced a course for itself in a direct ward the palace of Scone, two miles to thward; and had there lodged, in front alace, the greater part of the soil which lislodged in its passage, driving the cur- the Tay at Scone from its bed to a new l farther to the west—thus rendering nication between the banks at that spot ore difficult.

day was far advanced ere the full extent damage was ascertained, and orders is- r repairs to the public buildings, and as- s to the individual sufferers. The royal was at the same time largely distributed; a good king William went early to his fatigued with the toils he had under- and oppressed with the feeling of the s he had escaped, and the domestic loss sustained; but he laid his head on his midst the blessings and the prayers of a ad attached people.

CHAPTER II.

THE INCANTATION.

NG those who witnessed the "meeting waters" from the palace of Scone, on the is evening, there was one, forgotten in leral alarm, who did not look on an un- id spectator.

ne of the windows, above the esplanade, was seated, who regarded the king atten- essaying in vain, however, to obtain a his countenance, in order to read there- t there might be to fear from the conflict vaters; while ever and anon she cast anx- oks along the courses of the two rivers, from the casement at which she sat, e seen to some distance.

ough in the bloom of youth, her coun-

tenance was thoughtful and meditative; and being habited in a dark undress, which she had, hastily thrown over her form when roused from sleep by the noise of the upheaving ice, she looked a woman while still in her teens. Her countenance, which was noble and dignified in its expression, oval and regular in form, was pale even to whiteness, giving in some degree too marked an expression to her full dark eyes, and contrasting with the raven blackness of her locks, which fell in abundant and unconfined tresses over her shoulders. Even in the subdued moonlight it could be seen that Isabella, daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon, brother of the king, possessed beauty of no ordinary kind, and was justly considered the great orna- ment of her uncle's court.

On hearing the call of the young knight to the king, she rose hastily, drew the cloak more closely around her, and after a glance into the adjoining chamber, to ascertain if the young Prince Alexander, her cousin, a boy twelve years of age, still slept soundly, she descended to the lower suite of rooms, intending to ask further particulars of the messengers; but the king with his two attendants had departed, and there remained only the third knight, who knew little of the state of affairs, personally, at Perth, and who departed instantly after a horse had been brought to replace that which the king had mounted. She retired again to her chamber, but could not sleep—the noise without, and anxiety regarding the fate of the queen, kept her agitated and restless.

As the dull morning began to appear, she arose, put on her walking habiliments, and went out on the esplanade, leaving her cousin still asleep. Ere quitting his apartment, she could not resist stopping to admire his youthful beauty, and the promise of manly grace which his form presented. His auburn locks, parted in the middle of a high forehead, disclosed a miniature resemblance of his father; the nose high and commanding, the mouth partaking of the tendency in his mother's face to an expression of pride; the chin well developed and giving great firmness of character to the whole countenance. He opened his deep-blue eyes for a moment and smiled, but the exercise he had taken on the ice the day before appeared to have fatigued him—his eyelids descended in spite of his efforts to sustain them, and dropping the arm he had held out to his cousin, and which she had taken and kissed, he fell asleep again more soundly than ever.

The rooms were dull and dreary, as the Lady Isabella passed through them to attain the long, painted gallery—that boast of the royal palaces of Scotland, so poorly replaced in the modern house, on the same spot, by one of equal size, but retaining neither the antique ornaments nor the ancient memories of its predecessor. She thought she observed some one leave it as she entered, and she distinctly heard a footstep in an adjoining chamber; but she imagined it to be one of the domestics, and, opening a door

which led by exterior steps to the esplanade, she descended, amidst a crowd composed of the servants and palace-guards along with the inhabitants of the adjoining village, who had come early to inquire after their sovereign and the safety of his house. It appeared singular that no one had arrived, during the night, to bear intelligence of what had been passing so near them on the river; but so it was: and it was not until some hours later that one of the villagers, wandering southward, heard of the king's escape and the destruction of the bridge.

The Lady Isabella, after acknowledging the willing homage paid to her by the assembly on the esplanade, attempted to extend her walk to some points from whence she could obtain new views of the singular effects produced by the widening of the river, and the disposition of the blocks of ice among the trees; but the rapid melting of the snow rendered every pathway impracticable. She returned by way of the abbey, which nearly adjoined the palace, and held a lengthened conversation with the worthy abbees. In this manner two hours had passed ere she entered the court-yard on her return. At the gate she met the villager who had brought news of the king's escape, with some vague rumor respecting a disaster which had befallen the queen, or her infant, or both.

Full of anxiety she crossed the court into the lofty entrance or baronial hall, where trophies of the chase were mingled on the walls with armor and warlike weapons. It was the favorite resort of her cousin Alexander when the weather did not permit his sports in the open air; but he was not there. She looked out at the casement, but he was not to be seen among those of the household who still remained on the esplanade. The melancholy news she had received rendered her susceptible to sad impressions, and she mounted in haste to the sleeping apartment—but no Alexander was there, and no one responded to her calls. His bed wanted one of the coverlets, and had the appearance of having been suddenly left; but his clothes were not in the room, and he must have dressed ere leaving it. She now began to be seriously alarmed, fearing that his adventurous spirit might have led him into some scene of danger or some perilous enterprise.

She descended quickly, inquired of all the domestics she met, and, receiving no satisfactory answer, caused the alarm-bell to be rung, and all about the palace and the neighborhood to be summoned. The order was quickly obeyed, and the court was soon filled with alarmed and inquiring countenances; but no one had seen the young prince—all had been too much impressed with the terrors of the night and the fears of further encroachments of the river to think of others, or to observe who was either absent or present.

Wild with dread, she caused scouts to be sent out in all directions, and others were employed to search for footprints in the snow, such as it might be supposed, would have been left

by the young man. But no such prints could be discovered; and so rapid was the melting of the snow, that it was difficult to distinguish clearly between one footmark and another; besides, many had been coming and going to and from the palace in the morning, and to single out peculiar marks was declared by all the explorers to be impossible. She herself mounted to a balcony at the top of the palace, from whence the country around to some distance could be seen; but her eager inquiring looks in every direction met only with a waste of snow, or the tops of the dark firs beginning to be stripped of their monotonous burdens.

In this manner the day wore on—but no Prince Alexander appeared nor was heard of, and the Lady Isabella went to her chamber to weep, sick at heart and hopeless. How meet his father and mother? how meet her own father on his return from England—he who had confided to her care and keeping, in his absence, the heir to the throne—to her, who had forsaken her post—who had for a moment relinquished her precious charge, and during that moment had lost it? There was madness in the thought; and if she had not found relief in tears—in tears and in prayers—the mind of the agonized young woman would have sunk under the infliction.

With all her efforts to remain tranquil, she could not, however, rest in the chambers which had, until now, been cheered by the presence of her cousin, and she went to the abbey to receive the ghostly counsels and support of her aged friend there. There she passed the night; and there, in the chapel, the lights were kept burning; and until the morning was well advanced and the matins had been sung, prayers were unceasingly offered up for the safety and return of the son of the king, and for consolation and support to his afflicted cousin.

As the Lady Isabella was leaving the chapel a nun, who seemed to be one of the sisters, touched her arm, and gave her a sign to follow her to her cell. Arrived there, her conductress pointed to a seat, but, remaining standing herself, lifted her vail and disclosed a countenance which, once seen, could never be forgotten. It was in the finest style of Eastern beauty. Although past the middle age, and the fresh color of youth had passed away, there was a grace, a dignity, and a charm in every feature, which even years and the traces of the deepest sorrows seemed to have strengthened rather than dimmed.

"I am only a brief visitor here myself, Lady Isabella of Huntingdon," she said, with somewhat of a foreign accent; "but I participate deeply in thy sorrow, and ere I leave the vicinity of Scoon, I fain would be instrumental in aiding thee in thy search after the young prince."

The Lady Isabella was so much astonished both at the appearance of her companion and the nature of her address, that she could for some time find words to reply. At last she said—

"Pardon me, madam, if surprise to find a foreigner among the sisters of this sacred retreat has kept me for a moment silent. Pardon me, too, if I can not see how it is possible for a stranger, as she hath herself said, a passing visitant, to aid in such a dire emergency. Yet I thank thee, lady, noble lady, I dare even venture to say, for the kind interest thou hast manifested."

"Lady Isabella," the stranger replied with much gravity, "it is no idle curiosity—no mere desire of uttering some words of condolence which have led me to ask this interview. I take in thee a deep interest, the cause of which thou canst not know at present, although hereafter thou wilt cease to wonder that, at such a crisis in thy fate, I intruded myself on thy deep sorrow. I am the daughter of a clime where we rest not calm nor resigned under such afflictions—where, when the arm and the skill and the sagacity of man fail, we appeal to higher powers—to those powers of the air which invisibly direct all our actions, and watch all our paths. To them, when I had lost a son, I applied, and from them I recovered him."

"Lady! stranger!" the Lady Isabella exclaimed, starting from her seat; "what is it thou sayest? what am I to understand by thy words?"

"Be patient, gentle lady, and thou shalt hear. The knowledge of that art which openeth to us the veil that envelops the spiritual world is not confined to any one clime, although some are more favored than others. Even here in Scotland, there are not wanting those who devote themselves to the divine study: and I have myself put to the test the knowledge and the power of one who practiceth it not far from hence."

"Where, lady, tell me where?"

"On one of the neighboring heights, to the eastward of the palace here. That mountain hath been so long famed for the secrets there revealed, that I somewhat wonder the Lady Isabella hath not heard of it."

"I think I have heard it spoken of," the Lady Isabella replied, "but I took little heed of what was said. I regarded it but as one of the many idle tales which are handed about among the domestics."

"Regard it so no longer, gentle lady. Put it to the proof thyself. If there be in all the land, those who know what is hid from the rest of mankind, they are to be found on the hill of Dunsinnane—haunted, according to the vulgar—hallowed, in the estimation of those who have profited by the information to be gained there."

"I shall not lose an hour, lady, in profiting by thy advice—for alas! while the fate of my cousin remains hid from me, I am so wretched that I often wish death would come to relieve me from my misery. But how shall I gain access to those who can aid me there?"

"Take with thee only one attendant; one in whom thou hast confidence, and go boldly to the ruins which crown one of the summits of

that hill. It is one proof of the power of those whom thou seekest, that they know afar off those who approach their dwelling, and are well aware of what brings them: be courageous, and all will yet be well."

"But when shall I see thee again, lady? Shall I find thee here on my return?"

"We shall meet again, Lady Isabella; go, and prosper."

Returning to the palace, the Lady Isabella called for a country lad who had lately been taken into the Royal service, and who had frequently accompanied her on her rides around Scone. On ascertaining from him that he was well acquainted with all the country east of the palace, she desired him to prepare two steeds; which he set about, choosing two of the highest he could find in the royal stables, in order to keep, as he said, the feet of the riders out of the "snav-broo."

She left the palace at an early hour with her one attendant, but the sun was long past the meridian ere they reached the base of the hill of Dunsinnane, and put up their wearied steeds at a hamlet where a bunch of heather indicated that degree of "entertainment for men and horses" which in all ages it has been customary to call "good." The roads at any time scarcely deserved the name, and now the melting snow rendered a passage over, or rather through them, a toil which excitement of no ordinary kind could alone have persevered in. Malcom, her attendant, who had nothing in his composition that could be called excitement—save the determination never to be "beat by a woman," would have turned back ere he had reached the end of the long avenue of Scone; but, "hang it," he thought to himself, "if a lassie like that can gang through brose like this, it shall never be said that Malcom Beg showed the white feather." So Malcom and his mistress fought through all difficulties, and overcame them on horseback, and on the level country; but how they were to do on foot, and a hill before them, was what he could not see his way through—and he stood for some time scratching his head, the very picture of doubt and perplexity.

"If, my lad," his mistress said, "you have any fear of attempting the ascent of the hill, I am not afraid of going alone. You may rest here till my return."

"It's no fear for mysel', my lady," the young man replied respectfully, doffing his bonnet, "it does na' muckle matter what comes o' Malcom Beg, he'll no be sair missed, excepting at meal-times. But oh, my lady—this sna'-broo, and that steep hill—and your, your—" looking at her slim ankles and delicate little feet.

"Fear not for me, my good young man," Lady Isabella interrupted him with; "I have that on my mind which renders me indifferent to, and heedless of difficulties. I am determined to attain the ruins which are somewhere on this hill, if God grant me strength and patience."

'It's the ruins ye're gawn to?' Malcom said,

surprise overcoming respect, "this is a bonny business. I beg your pardon, my leddie, but does your leddyship no ken, that it's no canny to gang near that out-wile o' a' the eerie places in this country-side?"

"I am quite aware of it, my lad; but still I am determined to go."

"This is a downright tempting o' Providence," Malcom exclaimed; "nae-gude can ever come o' gaun to play at pennystanes wi' the de'il. There's a spae-wife, or a spae-man there, that, they tell me, ye would need a lang spoon to sup wi'. Oh, if a loon like me might gie an advice to a leddie like you, it would be to gang hame; and if ye want the Taighairm raised for ye, send for Angus Macmurrugh o' Alyth, he's less acquainted wi' what a'boddy else kens, and sees mair o' what naeboddy else sees, than ony ane in a' the country-side. Besides, he'll come to your ain house, and if ye gie him plenty o' drink, he'll never haigle about the price."

"I say again, Malcom, that if thou art afraid, I shall go alone."

"It's no just being feared, my leddie, but it's possible no to be clear about doing a thing without being precessely feared to do it. My grandfather said aye to me, Malcom, my oe, when ye're no sure about a thing being right, dinna do it; and I've generally fand that my grandfather had the right end of the string."

As he thus finished the allusion to the wisdom of his ancestors, he was fastening the last lace of a pair of what would now be called snow-boots, then known as hunting-shoes, which he had, during the conversation, been buckling on the small feet of the lady about which he had expressed himself so much interested. He then rose, doffed his bonnet, and waited to see the effect of his oratory. Apparently, like other gratis advice, it was taken, but not acted upon, for the Lady Isabella, after assuring Malcom that she had no such misgivings as weighed upon his mind, took the path which led to the mountain.

Malcom did not now hesitate an instant. Assuring his mistress that if he had made so bold as to refer to his grandfather as a reason for remaining below, he had it upon the same authority that when master or mistress called upon him to follow them, he had no business to ask *where*, far less *why*, or *wherefore*. Thus, with a feeling that he had done his duty both toward his ancestor, his mistress, and himself, he strode on, with a courage that had been strengthened by having been allowed to give vent to his fears.

That courage was not unrewarded. The thaw, which had set in so rapidly in the valleys, had extended but slightly to the higher grounds, where it was again changing, as is often the case among the hills, into a temporary frost. The surface of the snow, which had been softened for a time, was now again hardening, and although the feet of the travelers partially sank into it, it was only to give them a firmer footing for each successive step. They thus drew near

the ruins of Macbeth's Castle sooner than the dared anticipate on leaving the hamlet.

Harassed in mind and wearied in body, as the Lady Isabella felt, she could not be altogether insensible to the view which burst unexpectedly on the sight, when she had attained the height immediately opposite and almost on a level with the ruins. On the north, the great vale of Scotland, as its name Strathmore implies extended from the city of Perth eastward as far as the eye could reach, covered indeed with snow, but out of which the green forests were here and there again showing their dark outlines. The range of the Grampians, by which it and the great green forest of Scotland were bounded on the north, were seen clearly define from the peak of Benvorlich in the west, until they were lost on the east amidst the plantations of "the thane of Glammis." In the centre of the range, and almost directly opposite to Dunsinane, Birnam reared its heavy form, with "Birnam Wood" at its base, as if still waiting orders to cross the wide valley. On the east the firth of Tay opened its ample bosom to the German Ocean, with the Carse of Gowrie—the garden of Scotland—then only partially cultivated, forming, even clad in snow, the picturesque and diversified middle-ground of the landscape in that direction, which was terminated with the Lomons of Fife, cutting stiff the monotony of the distant horizon. It was a spot from which a Scottish sovereign might have been proud to view his dominions, and where if he could have forgotten that Macbeth was tyrant and a usurper, he would have done ample justice to the good taste which led that monarch to choose such a spot for the strongest and most renowned of all his castles.

The Lady Isabella, although she had on had tradition, and not poetry and the witch of scenic representation for her instructor, was ignorant neither of the atrocities ascribed to the usurper who had built the castle, the ruins of which she now contemplated, nor of the supernatural incitements which led him to the throne and to his ruin. It was, therefore, with some dread that she surveyed the frowning towers and dilapidated walls—a dread which became an overwhelming and superstitious awe, when she saw a figure, answering in all respects to the man-woman tenants of the "blasted heath" cross the narrow ravine which separated the spot on which she stood from the castle, as if to approach her with slow and noiseless steps. To her attendant, he would have fled if he could but he was spell-bound.

"Welcome, Lady Isabella!" the figure said in strange harsh accents; "I have expected thee."

She could return no answer—her strength and courage forsook her, and she would have fallen had not the object of her terror advanced rapidly, and caught her as she was sinking to the ground.

"Be composed, lady," the figure said; "no harm can befall thee while thou art with me."

Still afraid?" it inquired with a grim smile; and then addressing Malcom, "Come hither, Malcom Beg, and assist thy timid mistress."

But Malcom, instead of obeying the mandate, on hearing his name pronounced, went down on his knees and besought the figure to "have pity on a poor callant who never had seen a warlock before in his life, and wasna up to their ways. His aunty Elspeth had the name o' being a witch, but then onybody might see she was a woman, tho' she wasna very weel faur'd."

The natural sound of the boy's voice aroused the Lady Isabella somewhat out of the state of torpor into which fatigue and terror had thrown her; and assuring the figure that she was able to follow, it led the way across the hollow to the ruins, Malcom following them at a respectful distance, until they reached the remains of a drawbridge which led to what had been the principal entrance to the castle; where Malcom stopped, and from whence no entreaties of the weird sister could prevail on him to advance.

On entering the ruins, Lady Isabella and her conductor were met by a woman enveloped in one of the large hoods usually worn by the countrywomen of that period, who made signs to the Lady Isabella to follow her. She was conducted across the court-yard to a low door opening into a narrow passage of some length, terminating in a small room, with some degree of comfort in its appearance, in which a table was set out with refreshments, which the lady visitant was invited by signs to partake of. Anxious to overcome the lassitude she felt, and to bear the anticipated interview with the "warlock," she tasted them; but whether it arose from fatigue, or that the condiments contained any thing of a soporific quality, she was unable to resist an inclination to sleep, and, leaning her head on her arm, she soon fell into a profound slumber.

When she awoke, she found herself laid on a couch, composed of the skins of deer, in a vaulted chamber of some extent. A few rude seats and a stone table were its only furniture besides the couch, but the walls were almost covered with the heads and skins of wild animals, along with instruments of war and of the chase. A dark curtain hid the other end of the apartment from the view, and a single lamp, hung from the ceiling, gave light enough to render every object visible, but at the same time to impart a solemn and impressive feeling to the mind of its still dreamy and only occupant.

As she lay ruminating on the strange and sad event which had brought her there, the curtain at the other end was pushed a little aside, and a man entered, whom she recognized at once as the monster who had met her on the hill. He had thrown aside the habiliments of a woman, although the long black cloak in which he was wrapped, and the high cap he wore, were calculated to keep alive the superstitious feelings with which she had approached his wild and dreary abode.

As he strode up the apartment toward her, he said—

"The Lady Isabella of Huntingdon seeketh the highest exercise of thine art. It is then with the dread spirits of the air I must commune, not with the grosser tenants of the tomb."

The couch on which his visitor lay, shook under the terror she experienced, as the fears of what she was now to encounter stole over her.

"Fear not, gentle lady," he added, observing her agitation, "I know thine errand hither; and thou shalt be satisfied so far as mine art can go, but there are limits even to the powers of the air. Yet, daughter of David of Huntingdon, ere I seek, by the power of that art, to inquire into the fate of the young prince, I fain would hold converse with thee on matters which need no necromantic art to elucidate them. Thou seekest the young prince. Why? Is he thy lover? No, he is a child. Nay, maiden, blush not; he whom thou dost love is worthy doubtless of thine affection. Is it because he is thy cousin? As such he stands between thee and—

The speaker had advanced nearer and nearer the Lady Isabella as he proceeded in his address; while she, roused by his manner and the unexpected nature of his discourse, had gradually arisen, until their countenances confronted and almost touched each other, as he repeated the last words, and said—

"He stands between thy father and—the throne!"

Then waving his hand, as if he forbade her to speak, he continued—

"I know what thou wouldst answer; I know every working of that heart; I know with what indignation thou spurnest such a thought; but knowest thou, Lady Isabella, the heart of thy father? thinkest thou that he will thank thee for this zeal in searching for the heir to the throne?"

The Lady Isabella, summoning to her aid all of mental or bodily strength which yet remained to her, and fixing her dark piercing eyes on a countenance which it required no ordinary degree of courage to contemplate without terror, thus replied—

"Fiend, or tempter, or both; my noble father hath not a feeling, hath not a thought, which is not full of loyalty toward his royal brother, and of affection toward his brother's children."

"David of Huntingdon," replied the tempter, with a sardonic smile, "is a noble-minded man—a man with whom kings might be proud to form an alliance; but, after all, he is but a man, and crowns fall not within every man's grasp. Nay, lady, I do wrong thus to speak to one so ignorant of the world, of what men of the world only understand. I will speak to thee of what even a woman—a young and lovely woman can comprehend. This knight of Moredun, this young gallant, this friend of kings, who might be the cousin or the brother of John Lackland, for all that he can call his own, knoweth he of, or favoereth he this search after a young prince

—a search which is not to be prevented even by the perils of journeys among snow, or the fear of meeting unearthly forms in secret places—knoweth he of this disinterested sacrifice—of this chivalric devotion on the part of a future—?” Here he made a long pause; then with a look there was no misunderstanding, he uttered with a sneer the word—“Princess.”

The pale countenance of Isabella changed color rapidly and frequently as he spoke, and then, when he had concluded, white as death, she sank back upon her rude pillow, and hid her face within her hands.

“I did but test the loyalty of thy noble heart, lady,” her companion whispered in her ear. “I did but put to the proof the firmness of that noble mind. Yet consider the situation of that young man. Friendless and unknown he came to thy uncle’s court; friendless he is not now; yet still unknown he dares aspire to the affections of her who yet may be—pardon me—I speak as one to whom the future were unvaild, and yet it is only at intervals, and those carefully sought for, that I can penetrate the dark caverns of futurity. I have seen, however, an empty throne—I have seen ascend there—”

“Peace, tempter!” Isabella exclaimed, raising herself up on the couch, “I came to thee as to one to whom the present, not the future, was known, to obtain tidings of him over whom I ought to have watched; whom but for a moment I had left, and in that moment he was snatched from me. If thou knowest aught of his fate, or canst know it, tell it me.”

Her tempter rose, and placing his finger on his lips, as if to command silence, walked toward the other end of the apartment, and drawing out from underneath the stone table a caldron or chafing-dish, blew on it until the charcoal became ignited, and threw a fiery tinge over all the vault.

The operator, who then, to the eyes of the Lady Isabella, became still more unearthly in his appearance under this artificial light, threw some powders into the caldron, which, sending forth a thick and odorous vapor, filled the room with a perfume which stole imperceptibly and pleasingly over the senses, giving renewed strength to the nearly exhausted victim of this lengthened torture, enabling her to rise from off the couch, and to advance toward the stone table, on which she leant.

Assuming the air and position of a Python, and waving a wand on high, the magician chanted some verses, of which the following may be considered a condensation:

Spirits of water, spirits of air,
Spirits abounding every where:
Hid from the many, known to the few,
Never unsought for, coming to view.
Come at my charming, come at my call;
Leave the lone chamber, leave the full hall,
Search in the moonbeam, search in the tide,
Search the deep channels, search every side.
Bring me the loved of a crown, and the fear;
Bring him on cushion, bring him on bier;
Bring me the hope of a throne, and the dread—
Bring him here living, or bring him here dead!

As the incantation drew to a close, the curtain slowly rose and showed the figure of Prince Alexander stretched on a rock and covered with blocks of ice.

Bending over him, in the attitude of a mother who weeps at the bier of her first-born, the beautiful nun, the visitor of the morning to the Abbey of Scone, robed in white, completed a tableau which might have served for the model of a Sarcophagus in Parian marble.

The Lady Isabella uttered a loud cry, attempted to rush forward, and fell senseless on the cold pavement.

CHAPTER III.

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

Two days after the fall of the bridge, when the river began to bring down in its current only the smaller remnants of ice from the mountain rivulets, in insufficient weight or force to impede the occasional passage of ferry-boats, which long after continued to be the only mode of communication between the opposite banks—the king was seated at the head of a table in a spacious chamber of the palace at Perth, overlooking the river. At a little distance from his Majesty, and fronting each other, William de Bosco, the chancellor, and Allan de Galway, the high-constable, were writing at the same table. The two knights of the chamber, to whom the reader has already been introduced, Robert de Moredun and Henry de Hastings, kept watch and ward near the door.

“Robert de Moredun,” King William said, addressing the younger and fairer knight; “in giving succor to those whom this sad visitation hath despoiled of their property, it becomes not our royal dignity to forget those who lent us succor in so great a strait. Now that the passage is open to the other shore, let that young man, Adam Peebles, be brought to our presence who first crossed the dangerous path over the waters to our rescue.”

As Moredun prepared to leave the chamber on this mission, the king recalled him.

“Stay, knight of Moredun; it boots not such haste, nor needs it thine own quest. Let one of the men-at-arms be sent at a convenient season. We have another to speak of who hath not yet been mentioned—not because we are insensible to his claims, but because we feel them so deeply—nor have we been able, at a time of domestic affliction, to think how it is possible to mark sufficiently our sense of what we owe him. Say, William de Bosco and Allan de Galway, what should be done for the valiant knight who saved the life of his sovereign?”

“My liege, my gracious liege!” Moredun said entreatingly, and bending low before the king; “my honored and beloved sovereign, speak not of rewards for him who, in saving himself, did merely—”

“Robert de Moredun, it was not of the

asked counsel, it was of these our well-tried and right trusty advisers. Say, William de Bosco, what seemeth it to thee good should be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor?"

It is here necessary to reveal some of the secrets of the council-chamber. William de Bosco, the chancellor, was a man who looked well-stricken in years, although in reality he was not much in advance of the king. The constable, Allan de Galway, and the king, were nearly of the same age: both married, but neither of them had now any prospect of an increase to their families. Allan de Galway had married the oldest daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon, the king's brother, who had brought him no children, and his wife, therefore, in the case of the death of the king's son, was heiress-presumptive to the throne; but the succession would go to the children of the younger daughter of the earl, if she married and had issue. We may imagine, then, the spirit in which the following advice of the chancellor, De Bosco, was given, and how it was received by his colleague, but rival, at the council-board.

"Indeed, your Majesty," the chancellor said, "it is difficult to reply to such a question. To give money or estates in return for what the knight of Moredun hath done, would be to set a value on that which is inestimable—devotion to the sovereign at a moment when all others had forsaken him." Here a glance at Henry de Hastings sent that knight to an immediate contemplation of the view of the street from the window. "Neither," the chancellor continued, "can titles profit a true knight, whose highest honor it is to retain that name and title under which he stood by his king in the hour of danger. Seeing that these things can not be spoken against, I would be much at a loss how to counsel your Majesty in this case, were it not that I think I have observed an attachment on the part of the gallant knight of Moredun"—and here a glance at that already blushing young man sent him, in his turn, to look from the window at what might be passing on the water; "I have observed in him," William de Bosco went on to say, "a something which my esteemed colleague opposite me, and I, can well understand—for we both have been young in our day—a feeling, a sentiment, a devotion such as becomes a young knight—not merely toward the ladies of the court in general, but to one in particular. If I am wrong," the chancellor said, with another glance toward Moredun, "he can set me right. I give it, then, as my opinion, seeing he offereth no reply to the contrary, that the highest and most acceptable mark of the royal approbation which your Majesty can bestow, is to demand of your noble brother the hand of his beauteous daughter Isabella, for the young and brave knight of Moredun."

The words were scarcely out of the chancellor's mouth, when the high-constable Galway said with bitterness—

"To be the son-in-law of David of Hunting-

don would require a birth almost royal, and a state worthy of one allied with the throne. It seemeth to me, then, to savor somewhat of arrogance on the part of one whose birth is—"

"My worthy colleague is 'under error,'" the chancellor broke in with, seeing that the knight of Moredun had, in great excitement, advanced toward the council-table; "my noble colleague is in error to ascribe arrogance to him who hath made no demand. Rest tranquil, Robert de Moredun," he continued, addressing that knight; "it is thine own modesty hath made me speak, and that the noble Allan de Galway knoweth full well. Hadst thou uttered one word with the tongue, to me, of wishes which the eyes alone expressed, I should have been the last among the advisers of the king to give him the counsel I have done this day."

"Methinks," retorted the high-constable, "that this is an affair which respecteth the Earl of Huntingdon alone—saving always the grace of your Majesty—and unless he were here—"

"Thy scruples on that head, my lord high-constable," the king stopped him with, "will in a few minutes be set at rest. I see the retinue of my noble brother already defiling from the Water Street, and he himself doubtless is at hand. We must hear his news from England, my lord chancellor, ere we touch on domestic affairs. Gentlemen knights, summon the guard to receive the Earl of Huntingdon as becomes the brother of the king."

The two knights went out, casting looks of such very different import toward the dignities at the table, that the king himself remarked on their leaving the apartment—

"That knight of English birth, whom we keep near our person to please his sovereign, delights to keep us in remembrance that we are but as a vassal of the king of England. By the sword of Fergus, but the possession of four of our best fortresses might content John Lackland, without setting a spy upon us in our very council-chamber. Henry de Hastings must keep his looks as well as his thoughts to himself, or, by the beard of my father, he must cast them on the other side of the Tyne. His noble father, even when I unhorsed him at Carlisle, looked not so fierce as that gallant did just now at our trusty chancellor here. Wot you, Sir Constable, if he, too, aspires to the hand of the fairest flower at the Scottish court? By the head of Duncan, but I will teach him and his abettors, if he have any, what it is to brow-beat the councilors of the king whose family he—hound of an English kennel!—would dare to think of allying himself with."

The worthy King William, like all naturally good-tempered men, was exceedingly brusk when he was once fairly roused.

"The pedigree of this Robert de Moredun"—the constable began, forgetting for a moment whom he had to deal with.

"Is better than thine, were it known, Allan de Galway," the king again interrupted him.

with; "I would stake my crown on the birth of that young man, whose whole bearing is what becomes a knight, and would not disgrace a crown. By Saint Samson and all his virgins"—(what the monach meant by this oath, which he never used but when he was in a towering passion, no one could ever guess—the prior of Inchaffray thought it had some hazy kind of reference to the court of Solomon), "but it chafes me to see those whom I have taken out of the swamps of the Solway, and the slime of Sussex, beard us in our very palace, and at our own board. How now, varlet?" as a page opened the door of the council-chamber.

"The Earl of Huntingdon," the page proclaimed, as, the door being set wide, the king's brother was seen advancing through the antechamber, accompanied by a small retinue—the two knights of the chamber receiving him at the door, and conducting him toward the king, who hastened to meet him, and took him warmly in his embrace.

"Welcome, more than welcome, my brother! we have thought thy absence long, and have missed thee much at our councils."

"But what is this I hear, my royal brother?" the earl said, drawing himself back a little so as to survey the king's countenance—"what is this I hear of dangers and of losses?"

"It is even so, David," the king replied, as a deep shade of sorrow passed over his manly countenance; "it is even so; one of the stems of our house is gone, and this somewhat aged though still tough trunk would have been lost also, but for the devotion, bravery, and presence of mind of that young knight there. But let us speak of domestic affairs afterward—give us the news of England. What hope is there of escaping this thralldom, which galls me to the very quick, and defies me even in the very council-chamber?"

"Much, William, much. John of England desires to meet thee at Norham,* there to treat of ransoms and restitutions. He finds, I believe, Wales and France too much for him, and would be glad to withdraw the forces from Scotland which now garrison our southern fortreases."

"And those which garrison our council-chambers also, I hope, David," the king replied, who had not quite recovered his usual placidity; "they touch me to the quick, even in mine own house. I will meet him at Norham. But thou needest rest, my brother—we will adjourn the council."

"Nay, it needeth not," the Earl of Huntingdon replied, seating himself at the board, on the right hand of his brother; "I threw myself on the hospitality of the noble Hay, yester even, and it is only from Elcho I have come this morning."

David, Earl of Huntingdon, some years younger than the Lion-King, resembled him greatly in features, but was somewhat taller, and not

so athletic as his brother, who had been as remarkable for strength of body as for decision in judgment and promptitude in action. The earl differed from the king also in this respect, that he was never known to be angry or out of temper: and to this remarkable quality, and to the influence he possessed at the English court, through the extent of his property in that country, was ascribed the frequent truces and amicable arrangements made with Henry II., and John of England, which his brother as frequently broke through.

"And what of this affair between the Bishop of Rome and the King of England?" William inquired of his brother.

"It is all arranged," the earl replied; "John, like his father, hath done penance at the shrine of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, and the excommunication is to be withdrawn."

"By all the saints in the kalendar—and they soon will be too numerous to reckon—if every insolent prelate who rebels against his sovereign be added to them; but this John of England would sell his birthright—I was about to say, but that he has none to sell, that he may—"

"But, my royal brother, pardon me," the earl interrupted the king with; "the King of England had no concession to make to his Holiness—he only acted so as to appease his own conscience."

"Conscience, by our Lady!" William replied, striking his hand on the table, "where was his conscience in the absence of his valiant and noble brother, whom all Christendom but himself loved and honored?—where was his conscience in setting aside the line of Geoffroy of Anjou—in hunting them—persecuting them—slaying—"

"My dear brother, again pardon me," David meekly interposed; "we are not sitting at this table to judge the King of England."

"Thou his extenuator, David—thou!" the king said, laying his hand on the earl's shoulder, and surveying him with a look in which affection was mingled with the first shade of doubt which ever passed over William's frank countenance in addressing himself to or speaking of his brother—"thou his extenuator? If it were not, David of Huntingdon, that I know thee to be the most honorable knight, and to possess the truest heart that beats in my dominions, I would say that thine own nearness to the throne blinds thee to the treachery of this false-hearted and deceitful intruder with a crown."

It was too much; David of Huntingdon withdrew himself quickly from under the hand of his brother; the chancellor looked the very picture of distress; the constable could not repress a smile of satisfaction; and each of the attendant knights involuntarily drew nearer the table, the younger reflecting the look of the chancellor, and he of Hastings manifesting a strange mixture of wrath with something which, but for the darkness of his visage, might have been mistaken for a smile. William himself instantly felt his error, and the wrong he had done.

* Changed to Hexham, on the request of King William.

"*Mea culpa, mea culpa*," he exclaimed, throwing himself on the neck of the earl, "my noble-minded brother, I have done thee wrong. Forgive me, David; my temper was chafed ere thou hadst arrived, and such things have befallen me, that indeed I need thy pity rather than thy just displeasure."

At this moment a door at the upper end of the apartment opened, and the queen entered.

Ermergard, the consort of William the Lion, daughter of the Count de Bellmonte, and the great-grandchild of William the Conqueror, did not disgrace, in appearance, her high lineage. She was tall, of a majestic figure, with high features of great regularity, and an expression in which pride was mingled with a great degree of good sense. Several years younger than the king, she still bore traces of having been eminently handsome. She was in mourning, and marks of mental suffering still hung over her queenly countenance.

"What means this delay," she said, addressing herself to the council generally, rather than to any one in particular—"this delay on the part of the messenger sent to Scone?"

Then, observing the Earl of Huntingdon—

"Thou here, brother!" she said. "Thou art right welcome, I did not look for thee thus early."

The earl arose, and advancing to meet her, saluted her tenderly and respectfully.

"My coming would have been to me more happy," the earl replied, "if the intelligence of thy bereavement, my royal sister, had not been awaiting me. Believe me, I feel for thy loss as if it were mine own. Let us rejoice that thy gracious husband, my beloved brother here, is still spared to us."

The queen answered only by a look, in which a smile and a tear struggled for mastery. The king said—

"He is ever the same, this our noble brother. It was but now that I wronged him, cruelly wronged him, and already he hath forgiven the injury. In truth, David," and here he took his brother's hand, "I did foolishly as well as wickedly in addressing harsh words to thee; for ere thine arrival we had that in consideration at the council-board which will compel William of Scotland to ask a boon of the Earl of Huntingdon. Seest thou that young knight? He, at the risk of his life, turned back his steed to save his sovereign; and it was his presence of mind which saved us both afterward, when certain destruction would have attended a moment's hesitation. We have thought of rewards, but none has been before us which does not seem to dim rather than to place his conduct in all its brightness before the country and before the world. One course alone—"

Here Robert of Moredun was advancing toward the royal group, and about to speak; but William, with a wave of the hand, motioned him back to his place; he persisted in being heard, however, and ere he retired to the embrasure of the window where he had stood, he said—

"Pardon me, gracious liege, but I see the boat with the messenger to Scone, after whom her Majesty inquired, now on the river and about to reach the land."

The queen stepped to another window nearer her, and instantly exclaimed with alarm—

"The messenger is there, and the Lady Isabella; but where is my son?"

The two occupants of the council-table immediately rose, and all who were present went toward the windows overlooking the river. The boat had now reached the steps which led to the bridge-gate, and the Lady Isabella was seen mounting the steps, followed by the messenger and one of the guards of the palace. Her countenance was pale as ashes, her eyes swollen with weeping. The queen trembled and leant for support on the arm of the Earl of Huntingdon—the king stood, with folded arms, firm and upright, but his lip quivered, and there was that in his countenance which his foes would have feared to encounter.

Soon the door of the council-chamber was thrown open, and the Lady Isabella entered.

She took two steps forward, with a wildness in her look which made all in the room tremble; essayed to speak; but sank to the ground, as if every joint and fibre of her body had given way.

"What meaneth this?" the queen exclaimed, leaving the arm of the earl, rushing wildly forward, and grasping the arm of the attendant soldier. The king remained in his original position, his eyes only directed toward the door; but with an agonized expression in his features, which no language can depict. The soldier replied mournfully—

"The young prince, Madam, hath disappeared."

All expected that the queen would have fallen to the ground; but with eyes distended, as a lioness when bereaved of her whelps, she turned abruptly to the Earl of Huntingdon, placed a hand on each of his shoulders, and looking at him, as if she would have seen into his very heart, she said—

"Heir to the throne of Scotland, render me back my son!"

"Am I in God's stead, Madam, who alone can kill and make alive?" David of Huntingdon answered, much moved. "If indeed the hope of Scotland be cruelly cut off, his uncle, who loved him as his own son, will, of all the king's subjects in Scotland, be the chief mourner."

The king still stood as if struck by the lightning from heaven, rooted to the spot.

"Arouse that woman," the queen said, turning from the earl, and affecting a composure even worse to witness than her rage.

It was remarked as singular, that it was Henry de Hastings and not Robert de Moredun who was first to proffer assistance to the Lady Isabella; and that it was in his arms she found herself when first restored to consciousness. She shuddered as she beheld him, and looked anxiously around her; her eyes met those of the

knight of Moredun, and her look awoke him from a stupefaction which almost equalled that of the king.

Approaching her and kneeling at her side, he said—

"What is there that Robert de Moredun can do which can assuage the distress of the Lady Isabella?"

"Tell them," she said, in hollow tones which made all around shudder; "tell them that for a moment she forsook her charge, and during that moment the Prince Alexander—the hope of his country and the beloved of his family was lost, I fear, forever."

And the king "lifted up his voice and wept."

"What!" the queen said, turning hastily round and confronting the king; "will William of Scotland believe such a story from the lips of her who sees, in the absence of the prince, her own path opened up to the throne? Miserable councilors that ye are!" she said, addressing the trembling public functionaries; "what do ye, to stand shaking there when the hopes of the throne of Scotland are in danger? Where are your minions, your slaves? Let not a nook or corner of Scotland be left unexplored until my son be restored to these arms—why linger ye? Fly, ye dotards, or the curse of a bereaved mother will fall on your devoted heads. As for that *guardian*—her father will have to answer with his head if there be aught of truth in what she avers."

"And I will answer with my life for the truth of the Lady Isabella," the knight of Moredun exclaimed, throwing his gauntlet on the floor.

"And I swear to make the investigation of that truth my first and greatest *devoir*," the knight of Hastings said, taking up at the same time the gage which Moredun had thrown down.

"I thank thee, Henry de Hastings," the queen added; and turning to the Earl of Huntingdon, "Thou hearest—brother of the king and heir to the throne—thou hearest what these knights have sworn—on thee and on thine house will rest a heavy weid, until my son be restored to me."

"My daughter set great store by your son, Madam," the Earl of Huntingdon observed with gentleness; "and whatever may have happened to the prince, she at least is guiltless of evil thoughts toward him or his house."

"Until that be proved," replied the queen, "let her be kept in ward, and the knight who was so forward in her cause, let him be guarded also. You see, William of Scotland," advancing to the king, who had for some time leant over the table, his face covered with both his hands; "you see William," softening in her tone as the king lifted up his head, and she beheld the deathlike paleness of his countenance, and the depth of misery expressed in it; "you see, my beloved husband, that thy wife Ermergard refuseth to yield under this new stroke of fate, until she knoweth from whence it hath fallen, and whose hands have inflicted the blow."

Then walking majestically toward the door,

but avoiding as she would have done a viper on her way, the body of the Lady Isabella, which lay partly supported by the two knights, she said, as she crossed the threshold—

"And now for Scone!"

She had scarcely left the room, when the fall, as of a heavy body, was heard in the entrance hall, whither the king rushed, as the guards in great haste remounted the staircase.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CROWN AND ANCHOR.

IN one of the narrow streets which wound up tortuously from the Sandhill to the Castle of Newcastle-upon-Tyne—some traces of which still resist the improving hands of time, money, and Granger—a man of a seafaring appearance, accompanied by two females, toiled their way upward; an operation which was rendered more arduous by the bundles which each of them carried. They at last reached a house of some pretensions, bearing the sign of the Crown and Anchor sculptured and gilt above the door, into which all three entered.

It was still daylight; but the narrowness of the street and the smallness of the casements rendered the interior so obscure, that if it had not been for the blazing of a large fire in the principal or public room, the light of which penetrated into the narrow passage, they might have found some difficulty in piloting their way to that great rendezvous of those who, even then, went from "Canny Newcastle" "in ships to sea, and did business in the great waters."

The apartment into which they entered was somewhat singular in its appearance, resembling in several respects the hold of a ship. It was long, low, and narrow; the casements, which were numerous and small, being in recesses on the one hand, with similar divisions on the other side—the entire length of the room; those toward the casements being seated, and their counterparts apparently destined for the reception of goods or household lumber. At a sort of desk or pulpit, between the ample fire-place and the farthest window recess, Michael Plummer, the landlord, was seated, who kept a tongue for the customers and an eye on the accounts, while his wife and daughter attended to the calls of the former and to the comfort of the house.

The new-comers had advanced to nearly the middle of the apartment ere they were thus accosted from the pulpit—

"Ah! Maelstrom, is it thee, man—where hast thou been all this blessed long winter? We thought thee lost 'mangst the snaws o' Chevy, and now by thy rigging, thou maunst ha' been on the broad waters, eh? Come nearer the fire with thy companions, man, thou wert not wont to wait a biddin'!—there's a berth empty here, and the fire is still the best flower in the garden, eh?"

The person addressed accepted the invitation only in part; he advanced a little way with the females, whom he put into the farther end of one of the recesses, where they were completely in the shade, while he himself sat at the outer end, fronting the landlord, and enjoying the blaze of the comfortable fire. The light in which he was now placed, enabled a full view to be taken of him. He was a stout-built man, above the middle stature, of very marked features, which once might have laid claim to some regularity and to an expression of frankness, which was now changed into boldness, bordering on ferocity, while a foreign look, a foreign accent, and restlessness of the eyes—which never remained two seconds fixed on one object, but seemed at every glance to take in all within a certain circle around them, rendered his thoughts as impenetrable as if he had been the veiled prophet himself. Thus his constant assumptions of superiority at all times and in all places, were seldom disputed even by those who disbelieved in his infallibility; and fear, if not respect, generally accorded him the highest seat in the synagogue. There was something about him, in short, which no one could fathom, and “mysterious as Maelstrom” became a proverb in the parlor of the Crown-and-Anchor of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

“Yes, Michael,” this individual replied to the landlord’s address, “I have been on the deep, in the deep, and through the deep since I last saw thee. But what of that? Thou knowest me, Mike; morbleu! it is not trifles that turn me back when affairs are in hand, Mike,” with one of his glances which took in both his companions in the shade, and mine host at the desk, “affairs important, I say—and when I have friends to serve, parbleu!”

“Thou sayest true, Maelstrom; I never knew thee turned back but once, and that was by the tide, eh?” The landlord said this thoughtlessly, but it touched a sore point.

“And even it, by all the powers, Michael, as I have often told thee, even it should not have stopped me, but that the rock gave way beneath my feet. I think thou mightest have something better to greet me with on my return than that story, peste!”

“Nay, man,” Michael replied soothingly, “let it pass—for I never see thee without all old stories coming to mind. But where have that wife and wench of mine gone?—Here, Meg,” he said to a buxom dame who emerged out of one of the household recesses, “here is our old chum Maelstrom come back to us, with some craft he has towed along with him, and there is no one to ask them to bit or sup—thou hast not forgotten our old friend, eh?”

The mistress of the house and her niece, a fair, nay a beautiful girl, who followed her out of her obscure retreat, made their obeisance to Maelstrom, but said nothing. They stood, however, awaiting his orders.

“Ah, Mrs. Margaret—still the same, I see, and—oh, but,” smiling for the first time, and

showing a set of very fine and very white teeth—“oh, but, parbleu! Deborah *has* grown since I saw her—I always said, Mike, she would make a fine woman in her time. But, missus, I have a little convoy here under my charge, who, I dare say, are both hungry and thirsty. Bring them something hot, if thou hast it, dame, for the fog which followed us up the Tyne was any thing rather than warm; and after that let them have one of your little rooms up stairs, for they must be moving betimes to-morrow morning.”

“Thou goest not so soon, Maelstrom?” the landlord said; “that would be worse than not to have come at all. I assure thee thou has been much in request where thou wottest of.”

“I shall only see those women to their destination,” Maelstrom replied, “and be back on the instant. Ah, that will do, Deborah, my lass. Here’s to thee, pretty one. Eat and drink now, you two, and get to bed—eat, I say, young one—thou hast a journey before thee to-morrow, and thou wilt be hungry enough ere thou hast as good cheer again before thee.” Of the two women, whom he thus addressed, the one was so enveloped in a large hood that her age or looks could not be judged of; the younger whom he thus scolded was quite a girl.

“Nay, sir,” Deborah said, “be not so harsh with the young woman—she is perhaps too fatigued. Eat a little now if thou canst, it will do thee good.”

The young person she spoke to hid her face in her hands, and laying her head on the table, burst into a paroxysm of tears.

“By all the powers!” Maelstrom began, then suddenly checking himself, he leant over and whispered something in the ear of the young woman, who apparently by a strong exertion of self-command ceased to weep, and with a sob between each morsel, attempted to eat. Maelstrom now devoted himself entirely to her and her companion, and did not seem disposed to hold further communication with any one, until he had seen them both under the charge of Deborah, and led off to their sleeping apartment. He then took a seat close to Michael, with whom he immediately entered into conversation in a low tone, so as not to be overheard by the visitors, who were gradually becoming more numerous as the evening advanced.

“Well, Michael Plummer, how stands the cellar? Full, eh?”

“Nay, Maelstrom, we have missed thee for that sadly—there is scarcely any thing to be seen but bare rock, and the sea has worn another opening into the lower cave. Gorry went off on some errand to the north last week; Grimsby is still there, however, for we had a cargo of *vivres* and French wine from Dunkirk but the other day, which requires watching; and, so long as there is any thing to eat and drink, that Dundee devil never grumbles, although he and the rest of us all wish for a return of the good old days when Captain—”

“Thou shalt see them, Michael, thou shalt

see them, and that sooner than thou lookest for," Maelstrom replied, rubbing his hands, and trying to smile through a seriousness or unhappiness of expression which never for a moment left his face. Michael soon deepened that look by inquiring who and what the women were he had brought with him.

"The one I can't make out, but she seems too old, and the other too puny for thee, comrade," he added; "they don't seem to be up to thy mark, if Captain Maelstrom be not sadly changed, after the lady we have seen there, Maelstrom—"

"Hush, Mike! not so loud," his companion murmured; "I have picked up a prize which we must put into dock for repairs. This is not the time to say more. I must be off with them early in the morning, ere any one be stirring. Is the little craft at her old moorings?"

"She is, Maelstrom; but where, in the devil's name, dost thou mean to take them?"

"Ask no questions, an' thou wouldst be told no lies, mine excellent friend. Enough has been said at present, and I see some eyes on us.—Another can, my good dame. Ah! Elstob," he continued, addressing a jolly-looking man, who sat with a can before him at the end of one of the recesses, "how fares the world with thee? But why ask I? Thy mouth need not be called upon to tell what thy whole body declares."

"Why, I am middling in my bodily health, I thank thee," the butcher replied, "but business goes badly. So many sheep have died on the hills this winter, that mutton is dear; and scarcely any thing but fish is eaten. The borderers, too, have been very restless; they find nothing to eat on the other side of the Cheviots, and they come and pick off the ground any thing on this side which is fat and well-favored."

"Ay, ay," said a spare man opposite him, who fancied he combined in his own person the essence of the law, physic, and shaving of the town—"ay, ay, Elstob sayeth well—they eat up all the fat of the land, these rieviers of the borders—there are no gleanings left for the honest tradesmen. But our good Earl of Northumberland, the King of Scots, is coming to put an end to this state of things."

"The King of Scotland!" Maelstrom interrupted him with, "that good earl-king has something else on his hands, *parbleu!* which will keep him at home. Don't tell me," he added with a wave of the hand, intended as a quietus to the lawyer; "I have it on the very best authority, that the affairs of the King of Scots are in too raveled a state for him to make a voyage at present."

"Oh, Maelstrom must know—oh, Maelstrom is always well-informed on what is passing," arose in murmurs on all sides. But the lawyer-barber was not to be put down—

"I do not pretend," he said, "to the same sources of intelligence as one who has traveled so much as Maelstrom; but a person on whom I can depend, and who has come direct from *Berwick*, saw there some of the body-guards of

the Scottish King, and heard on every side that there was to be a meeting between the monarchs of England and Scotland, this very week, somewhere in this county of Northumberland."

Maelstrom, while the lawyer was speaking, sat very uneasily, and could scarcely restrain himself until he had finished. He then turned round and said, in a tone which silenced all in the room—

"When I said that William of Scotland would regain his liberty, did he not regain it? When I said that he would have to give some of his best towns as surety for it, did he not give them? When I said that he would do homage to the King of England, did he not do it?" Pausing a little for an answer, and taking silence for consent, he added, "I tell you he cometh not at this time to meet the King of England."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when the trampling of horses was heard in the street, which ceased at the door, against which the, at that time, too well-known sound of a sword-hilt made itself recognized.

The landlady went to reply to the summons, while a profound silence reigned throughout the apartment. She soon returned accompanied by five horsemen in the Scottish uniform. All eyes were alternately directed from them to Maelstrom, whose dark and mysterious look assumed a troubled expression, which he strove in vain to hide under an affectation of ease and indifference.

"We are sorry to incommode you, good dame," he who appeared to be the leader of the party said; "but our noble king is about to hold a conference with the King of England at Hexham, and he sends a body of troops to lodge at Newcastle; as it would indicate a want of faith to place them more near his royal person. We have come beforehand to provide for their disposition here, and must commit ourselves for the present to thy hospitality and that of mine host here, as I presume I should call that respectable-looking gentleman in the corner."

"You are right, Sir Knight or Sir Squire, I do not know which," Michael replied sulkily; "you are in the right in your choice of a landlord—but you are wrong in choosing this hostelry for your lodgment. We have not a chamber unoccupied."

"That matters little to soldiers," the leader replied; "we can make ourselves very content on these benches for the night; see to the horses, my men, and bring in our young comrade with you. The lad has not been much accustomed to the saddle, and will want rest. Set some half-dozen cans there; and something to eat, my good dame—I pay for what I order and methinks your custom here," taking glance round the room, which finished with Maelstrom, where it rested with an expression which reflected somewhat of that individual frown—"your custom here is not so great but that half-a-dozen leal and true Scotsmen, who are half brothers, you know, to the Northumb-

rians, might not be so unwelcome as the reception given us by your mate there indicated. Besides, if all goes right at Hexham, our Lion-king shall know what beasts of the forest honor him in the town of the grandson of Robert-the-Devil, and his leman, the getter up of fine linen at Falaise."

Michael Plummer, on whose politics the sound of "paying the bill" had a wondrous effect, as indeed it has had on politics in all ages, now affected to chuckle, as he said—

"Your honor can both take and give a joke, I see—and, natheless, understands the way o' Lanny Newcastle. We like to look to our cattle first, eh, Elstob? before we—"

"Before you slay them, I suppose," the trooper interrupted him with; "come, my good lame, here's to thee—thy canny goodman did not require to look long at thee, I should think, before he struck a bargain; and, by my halilome," as he set down his cup without tasting it, as Deborah entered the room—"by my halilome, if he has many head of cattle like this, he may well hold his own head high sometimes. Here's to thee, pretty one. But why so sad, my lass? Thou'rt not fash'd, my good girl, because a rough soldier pays thee a compliment? Here, drink to me in return, as a pledge that I am forgiven; come now, wipe out thy father's rudeness (if he be thy father) with a kiss in the cup—I won't ask for more."

Deborah put the cup to her lips, and gave the fine, manly, frank soldier a smile, which told him how heartily he was forgiven, and how well he was understood; but a cloud came over her countenance instantly afterward, and she was observed frequently during the evening giving very inquiring looks toward Maelstrom, and often holding whispering conversations with her mother.

The troopers now began to drop in one by one. They were stalwart, honest-looking fellows, in a green garb or uniform, something resembling that long afterward worn by the archers of James V. They all, save their leader, who had attained the rank of esquire, and had seen a good deal of service in Norway, spoke the homely tongue, resembling the modern Scotch, which was then in almost universal use among the lower classes and trades-people in the north of England, as well as in Scotland; although in Scotland it was then, as since, broader and stronger in expression and in accent. The young man referred to by the captain, and who had but recently been promoted to his troop, came in among the last, and while the following conversation was going on—

"Brave leader," the lawyer-barber was saying, "we were in some degree prepared for the conference of which you speak, if it had not been for rumors that have reached us of troubles at the court of Scotland; troubles—"

"Whence come those rumors, and what do they respect?" the leader inquired sharply.

"They were brought to us by gossip Mael-

strom there," the lawyer replied, looking two inches taller, and almost fierce at the idea of having beaten Maelstrom at politics; "by a friend of our host's, seated next him there, one who knoweth all that opens and shuts—in the opinion of some men," he added, in a lower tone.

"And pray, what were those rumors, and where didst thou hear them, Master Newsmonger?" the leader asked, fixing a stern regard on Maelstrom, who returned the look with interest, and seemed for some time not disposed to give any answer.

"I would require first to know," he replied at last, "by what authority I am questioned."

"By that of half-a-dozen good swords and spears, in the service of William the Lion of Scotland—a court from which, in this house, there is this evening no appeal. Your answer?"

"Hath there not been afflictions in the king's family?" Maelstrom demanded, with a very scrutinizing glance at the leader, which he carried from him round the room, until it reached the newly arrived trooper above noticed—a modest young man, who, as if blasted by the look, turned pale as ashes, and slunk into one of the settles, from whence he continued to gaze on Maelstrom, unseen by the latter, as if anxious to believe that he had been mistaken in his first impression.

"I am here to ask questions," Gilbert said, "and not to answer them; and I must have them answered promptly too, and to the point. Of what troubles have you spoken, and where have you heard the rumors? Answer me."

Maelstrom's look turned dark as midnight; and for some time he seemed as if meditating an attack on the officer. At last, in a very haughty tone, he said—

"I have heard of losses in the king's family."

"There hath been a loss," the soldier said quickly, "but not such as to impede or delay the king's journey southward: thou talkest of losses."

"It might be one, or it might be more," Maelstrom said, with a look of triumph around the room, "my gossips find I was in the right, as they have ever found."

"Thou mayst find thyself more in the wrong than thou lookest for, master tale-bearer. Where didst thou gather this bundle of news?" his interrogator demanded.

"I heard it as I came up the streets of Newcastle," Maelstrom confidently replied.

"My gossip will forgive me," his rival newsmonger, the lawyer, interpellated, "if it had been in Newcastle, or in all Northumberland, I must have heard it—and no breath of it ever reached my ears until I heard it from thyself this evening."

"It was either there or on board the vessel," Maelstrom doggedly remarked.

"What vessel?" the trooper demanded.

"The Thistle."

"From whence?"

"Berwick."

"Thou liest," the leader of the troops said, rising; then, addressing Michael—"Landlord, look to this man. He leaveth not this house until further interrogated in the morning, when we can confront him with others. No such vessel as he hath spoken of has been at Berwick within the last week—I examined the register myself. Conduct him to his chamber: and you, Will Fairless, keep guard for an hour at the door. You will relieve each other in turn during the night."

The orders of the leader were quickly obeyed; Maelstrom was led up stairs to the room occupied by his two female companions, with whom he was shut up; and to which he submitted with a patience which surprised his conductors. The nightly frequenters of the Crown and Anchor slunk away home; Michael Plummer himself seemed desirous to avoid converse with the soldiers, and went to bed also; and soon the only sounds heard in the public room were Dame Plummer and a servant washing the cans and dishes in two of the recesses, and the long-drawn breathing of the troopers snoring on the benches.

By-and-by, Deborah stepped out of another recess, and regarding minutely if the leader as well as the rest of the band were perfectly sound in their lairs, she approached that in which the young trooper, Malcom Beg—for it was none other than he—lay, whom she found stretched out like his companions, but wide awake. Making a sign to him to follow her without any noise, she disappeared into one of the recesses into which Malcom dived after her, and out of it again, after her still, into the open air, at the back of the house. Malcom had had his liaisons, like other domestics in royal palaces, but for any thing with so little maiden coyness, especially on the part of one so beautiful and so modest-looking, he was not prepared: and he stood abashed under the light of a clear moon, facing as fair a creature as ever the queen of night shed her beams upon.

"Thou art a good lad, I think," she said in a very low voice, and her mouth was so near Malcom's ear, that he felt her balmy breath—"thou art a good lad, I do believe; and the looks I saw thee cast toward that strange man, who was accompanied by those two women, make me think thou must know something of him."

"Indeed, my bonnie lassie," Malcom replied, all in a twitter—for the breath he had inhaled set all his nerves in motion—"I think I should ken the loon, and an ill-faur'd ane he is—and I have a notion I've seen him in a queer place—but it's scarcely possible—though, at the same time, thae een o' his, sae like a founmart's, and aye looking as if he were grabbin' for moudiwarts, or some ither vermin—it's scarcely possible to be mista'en about them. And yet I *dinna ken* very weel what to think; for, as my grandfather said aye to me, Malcom, my oe, *says he—*"

"Well, Malcom, as that's your name—you would not be afraid to go on an expedition at this time of night?"

"Fear'd? A chap like me, that's had to do wi' warlocks, needna be fear'd to gang ony where by night or by day—abune a', if you gang wi' me"—and Malcom was putting his arm round her graceful form.

"Nay," she said, as she withdrew herself gently from his embrace, and smiling sweetly as she added, "it was not for that, my good young man, I wished thee to come hither. I have known something myself of this Maelstrom, but his connection with these women puzzles me; and I fear, from what one of them has told me, that he has some deep scheme in hand with regard to them. The older keeps herself muffled up, and will not speak—the younger is very young, and is afraid, I think, to speak out—but she is Scotch, and I think would declare her true position, and what she is afraid of, to some one of power and influence among her own countrymen. Now, as the Scotch Court is entering Northumberland, I wish thee to take instantly to horse—"

"Wheesh, wheesh," Malcom said, touching her arm, and pointing toward the end of the house the farthest from the street.

They had cause to keep quiet, for a small door leading into the yard was gently opened, and Maelstrom and the two women came quietly out, turned the corner of the house, and took their way quickly down the street. The door was shut after them from within.

"Now, Malcom, this alters all our proceedings."

"Will I ca' the guard?" Malcom asked.

"No, no—on no account—run after them, like a good lad—taking care that you are not seen by them; observe the road they take, and come back by the lane which leads by the other side of the stables here—I shall have a horse ready for you there, should it be required."

Malcom was off instantly, and on the track of the fugitives. He observed them turn the corner of another house at a little distance, and he was soon on a line with them by crossing a field or garden before he came to that corner. The lane which they were traversing rapidly and in silence led by a short cut to the river. He followed them until he saw them step into a boat, unmoor it, and glide down the Tyne, assisted by the returning tide, and a pair of muffled oars—kept always in readiness for Michael Plummer's not infrequent nocturnal expeditions.

He then ran back, in the direction of the indicated lane, to the stables, where he found Deborah waiting him with a horse. He told hastily what he had seen: she gave him as rapidly instructions how to proceed. He was just about mounting—

"But what'll the captain say?" he asked, with his foot in the stirrup.

"Leave that to me, Malcom."

He hesitated a moment—she saw the reason of it—retreated a step and held out her hand;

he kissed it respectfully, and was off in a moment down the road which led eastward out of Newcastle by the river's side.

When within sight of the boat, he slackened his speed and continued to watch it narrowly, although it was only dimly visible at times, as it kept in general toward the southern bank of the river. In about an hour he was on the high ground overlooking the stream, where North Shields now stands, with the Abbey of Tyne-mouth rising in strong, dark outline between him and the ocean. There he stood some time, and from not seeing the boat go out to sea, he concluded that it had moored on the opposite beach. He immediately descended, roused the inhabitants of a little inn among the fishing-huts, to whom he confided his steed, and, with a small gratuity, prevailed on an "ancient mariner" to scull him across to the opposite shore.

Arrived there, he stood some time at a loss; but after an examination of the locality, made with a minuteness and tact which would have astonished the lady who saw him fall trembling before a warlock, he concluded that the boat must have moored more to the eastward; and, prevailing on his conductor to lengthen the trip, he stepped again into the wherry, and in about an hour had his judgment justified by seeing the boat moored within a creek, where, but for his very sharp young eyes, it would have escaped his observation. Fortunately the sea was smooth as a mirror, and the clear moon was a kind friend on the occasion. He wished his steersman to wait his return, but the old sailor said the place had not the best name in the world, and he declined remaining alone in it.

And, in truth, as Malcom advanced southward on the beach, he thought the boatman had some reason for disliking a place more "eerie" in its aspect than any spot he had ever met with, even among the Sidlaws, some of which he knew were wild enough. The rocks, which rose perpendicularly and to a considerable height on his right, were not content to form a solid wall to resist the encroachments of the tide and the lashing of the waves, but appeared to have stepped out of their places, and to have advanced upon the beach, and into the very waters, in all imaginable forms and sizes. These detached groups were often exceedingly picturesque, and a party in search of that peculiarity might by day have threaded their mazes with pleasure and even with amusement. But to a lonely traveler, who saw only the upper part of their forms tipped by the moonlight, while their lower extremities, and all the mass of the parent rocks, were hid in mystery and obscurity, the scene had a wildness about it which was calculated to conjure up every unpleasant recollection and every unearthly form which imagination has either fancied, or the perversers of young ideas suggested.

Malcom, however, had an incitement for pursuing his present journey too strong to allow him to give way to any such feelings—for Deborah was ever present to his mind—and on

he strode for some distance, without seeing or encountering any living thing. By-and-by the beach became for some distance clearer of such obstacles, but it was only to render more conspicuous and striking a new manifestation of them. At the locality to which he was advancing, the rocks had not been satisfied with marching forth in individual masses against the encroaching waves—they had gone in a body, so to speak, into the sea, where ruined castles, towers, and triumphal arches, seemed to indicate the site of an early Tyre or Carthage of the north—of a city which had "sat upon many waters." It had now the aspect of a city of the dead.

While Malcom was surveying this wonderful freak of nature, he thought he observed something white move upward on one of the chief masses of the rock which projected into the sea. Watching in that direction for a few seconds, he saw distinctly one, two, three figures pass between him and the sky, as if crossing from one mass of rock to another.

Hurrying forward, he gained the foot of one of the masses which rose perpendicularly from the sandy beach. It seemed to present an unbroken surface of wall. Leaping, however, to a rock which stood within the water, he found a fissure in the large rock, within which something like rude steps led gradually upward. Ascending them, he attained a shelf of the rock where his progress seemed again stopped. Here, however, on examination, a pathway was found by stepping across an opening, the depth of which in daylight it would have been fearful to contemplate.

This time, on crossing, it was a passage and not a staircase in the rocks which awaited him. He proceeded cautiously forward in the total darkness, feeling on each side with his hands as he advanced. Again he paused and listened, thinking that he heard voices near him. At that moment he was seized in the firm grasp of a man, and hurled forward in the passage—a door behind him, which had escaped his search, grated heavily on its hinges, and shut with a force which shook the solid rock, and touched even the hitherto firm nerves of the young adventurer. With it sank all the excitement and all the new-born hopes of Malcom Beg.

CHAPTER V.

MARSDEN ROCKS.

VERY early the following morning, the inmates of the Crown and Anchor were aroused by a great commotion in the taproom. When it came to Malcom Beg's turn to mount guard, he was nowhere to be found, and, in the search after him, one of the horses was discovered to be missing also. The commandant of the party, whose confidence in Malcom, for various reasons, had been very great, was much perplexed and troubled; but his consternation and perplexity

were beyond bounds, when the chamber where Maelstrom and his companions had been shut up was found empty. A brief search explained the mode of their escape, by a door and passage unobserved in the evening; but why Malcom should also be gone no one could comprehend. His flight, as it seemed, furnished, however, food for commentary on the part of some of his companions, who had been envious of his sudden advancement.

"I said that bird would soon take wing," Robert Sempill observed to Will Fairless, "he was ow'r wild to settle on the roost, and was fonder of supping his kail than drawing his claymore."

"And then he was so gi'en to glaikrie," Will readily chimed in with, having been rather jealous of the looks he had seen Deborah cast so often toward him the previous evening; "a' the bonny lasses between this and Scone he was eye casting sheep's een at, tho' he got very little encouragement. It's no chaps like that find favor wi' the lasses; eh, Deborah?"

Deborah thus appealed to, replied with a very innocent look, although there was something in it which Will did not exactly relish.

"He seemed a *very* honest lad that."

"Thou sayest true, my lass," the leader coming up to them said, "and I believe him honest yet, although appearances be against him. But we may not pass the time in idle talk. Will, Robert, and you, will take the upper part of the town here in charge—the two others will go below. Prepare the inhabitants for the reception of a thousand troops who come not to pillage, but to pay, as becomes the retainers of the Lion-King. I myself have matters to arrange with mine host here."

When his men were gone, the leader placed himself on the seat which Maelstrom occupied the previous evening, and held the following conversation with Michael Plummer, whose looks indicated that he would rather have been anywhere else.

"You know this Maelstrom?"

"I have known him as a frequenter of the tavern, that is all."

"Ah?"

"All—I can swear it;" but Michael's looks denied his words.

"There is no occasion to swear in the matter; thy looks bowray thine assertions. Thou knowest more of him than thou desirest to tell; although I can perhaps tell thee something more of him than he himself hath declared. I think I recognize in this man one who was suspected by, and watched by, the leaders of the Scottish army, in Normandy; he is one of three—I believe I may say of four—who were afterward discovered to have been guilty of high crimes, and whose life, when he is again caught, will pay the forfeit of his villainy. If thou canst give me any guide to his present hiding-place—and I believe thou knowest it full well—an ample reward awaits thee. If it be afterward found that thou hast aided him in his escape,

and wilt not atone for it by instant disclosure, thou shalt assuredly share in the fate which awaits him."

Michael Plummer presented the very image of a rat caught in a trap, who is hesitating whether to eat through it, or allow himself to be taken. He determined on the former.

"How is it possible for me, sir," he began, "to know the haunts or the occupations of all those who frequent my humble hostelry, eh? I should indeed soon lose any little custom I have by trying to find them out, to say nothing of disclosing them. No, no, Michael Plummer sits here to keep all straight—he looks not beyond his little accounts, save it is to see that no one goes out without paying. Why should I do more, sir, eh?"

"In short, you are determined," the soldier said, "to tell nothing—you must be prepared, then, for the consequences"—and saying thus he arose and buckled on his sword.

"But, Sir Commander, should any thing come to my knowledge—"

The soldier, without regarding his remonstrances, went out, sought his horse in the stable, and rode off; Plummer observing, with increased anxiety, that he rode in the direction of the quay, and that he dismounted near the Thistle, on board of which vessel he seemed intending to remain some time, as his horse was led away by an attendant.

He was scarcely seen go on board by Michael, when three horsemen approached the inn by the steep street leading up from the bridge. One by his armor and blazonry, and the motto of the Campbells, "*Follow me*," was recognized by the host as the knight of Glenorchy; his companion also in armor but bearing the cloak and cross of the Templars, displayed his name and lineage by the word "*Cavendo*," beneath the blazonry of the Cavendishes. The third horseman, by his livery and appointments, seemed to be the squire of the latter. They appeared to be well known at the Crown and Anchor, for Cavendish called out as they drew up their horses without dismounting—

"Ho, Plummer! hath Maelstrom yet arrived?"

"He hath, your Reverence."

"Is he within?"

"No—he left again soon after his arrival."

"Know you whither he hath gone?" the Scottish knight inquired.

"I know not, Sir Dougal," Plummer answered, adding, in an under tone, "there are others have put the same question. The commander of an advanced party of the Scottish force, which are coming hither—and who is even now on board of the Thistle, down there at the quay—is making inquiries after him in a way I don't much like—not I."

Campbell and Cavendish looked at each other for a few moments, when the latter said—

"Tell him, Plummer, when thou seest him again, that he will find one of us at Durham. Be on the alert, Michael, and cautious—thou

many of these northmen on the wing,
2."

turning their horses' heads, they retraced
back pace the road they had ascended, and,
crossing the bridge, were soon lost to view.
Michael was about to re-enter the albergo
two horsemen rode up in the opposite
direction, whose steeds bore marks of hasty and
ravel. The one was dark in complexion,
handsomely equipped, as became a courtier
second seemed to be his squire or servant.
giving the horses to the charge of the latter,
Michael entered the inn, ushered in by the
landlord, and bowing.

Michael, placing himself at a
table placed for him near the fire, after
menting Margaret Plummer on the good-
the vintage, and bestowing a long and
that impertinent stare on Deborah, he in-
in a careless manner, if any of the king's
had yet arrived. On being told that
the avant-couriers had come the previous
one of whom were engaged in procuring
for the main body, and that the leader
forerunners had gone down to the quay;
asked, with the same nonchalance in his

to be sure, this same river Tyne is one
which many vessels now find refuge."
"Only that, brave sir," the landlord said,
"many vessels now come also to our quay
of commerce."

"Doubt of it, landlord. Your name, by
7, is—"

Michael Plummer, honored sir, at your

service to you, Michael Plummer; this
wine—very good wine indeed. You get
blest, by the vessels which come here
foreign lands. See herein the advantage
where commerce is understood; and
there are men such as the landlord of the
and Anchor to profit by it for himself
customers."

"You do me great honor, noble sir," Michael
bowing to the ground; "I wish I had
requesters of my humble hospitality who
as well judge of my poor efforts."

"You, doubtless, have frequenters from for-
eign parts, as well as those of your own neigh-
borhood, Michael? Fetch me another flask, my
ass; your daughter, I suppose, from the
dance?" he added, with much suavity,
giving his address to Michael.

"Your niece, noble sir," Michael replied, with
which certainly did not increase the re-
nounce; "but the same to me, I may say,
a daughter. If I am proud of my wine,
no less so of my wife and niece—as good
seepers as you will find in all Northum-
berland—I would not say so before them, for it
spoils them; but they are gone out."

"Doubt of it, Michael Plummer, one may
see their countenance—sit down, Michael,
with this flask. Nearer the table
now! What do you suppose the leader

of these scouts can have to do at the quay, now?
I pledge you, landlord.

"My respectful service to you, honored sir.
I am inclined to think, noble cavalier," he ad-
ded, in a low and somewhat confidential tone,
"that something which happened here last
night has taken the captain to the quay."

"Ay, indeed," his companion said carelessly;
"what could have happened in an inn in New-
castle to interest the leader of a party of Scotch
troopers? Some love affair, I suppose?"

"Not at all, noble sir. A person whom I
have known formerly, arrived by the Thistle
with two women in his company."

"I was sure it was love, or that it was an
affair about women," the stranger said; but he
leaned his head on his hand in such a manner
that Michael could not see the intense anxiety
with which he awaited the sequel.

"Asking your pardon, mine honored guest,"
Michael said, "it was nothing of the sort. The
captain says he has known the man formerly in
Normandy—and that if I, bless the mark!—I,
as if I were responsible for him, do not deliver
him up, he threatens—"

"But why not deliver him up?" the stranger
asked quickly.

"For a very good reason, noble sir; and that
is, because he escaped from this house during
the night with the women."

"And you know where they are gone," the
cavalier said, starting to his feet, and seizing
Michael by the throat, who dropped on his knees
before him with surprise and agitation—"and if
you do not disclose the place of their retreat to
me, I will strangle thee on the spot."

"Let loose thy hold," Michael said, gasping,
"and I will tell thee"—but after the other had
withdrawn his hands, he added—"yet how can
I tell that which I do not know?"

"No prevarication, rogue of a contrabandist!"
the cavalier said, grasping him again by the
throat, but less tightly, "delay not a moment
to give me the information I have demanded,
or thy life is not worth a minute's purchase."

"I conclude then, sir," Plummer said, "by
their having unmoored the boat which belongs
to this house, that they have gone down the
river. Let me free, honored sir."

"Whither have they gone with the boat?"
"How should I know, mine honored guest?"

"Thou knowest full well; and from this spot
thou risest not, varlet, until thou speakest the
truth."

"But even were I to tell thee, noble knight,"
Michael faltered out, "it could profit thee
nought. Thou couldst not find them!"

"Wilt thou conduct me to their retreat;
and instead of being strangled, thou shalt be
rewarded."

"I will."

"This evening?"

"This evening," Michael responded with a
groan, as the cavalier withdrew his hands, and
his victim rose up and adjusted his cravat and
doublet.

"Say nothing of what has passed to any one—more especially to the leader of the troopers," the stranger said, as Michael swallowed the remainder of the wine, to wipe down the effects of the assault.

"You need not fear, noble sir. If you do not speak of it thyself, I am likely to be the last to broach the subject."

The attendant of the cavalier here entered; after a long and interesting conversation with-out, with Deborah, which left traces of thought and anxiety on his face—a good-humored freckled face naturally, surmounted by a stock of very ungraceful carrotty hair.

"I shall rest here to-night, Macduff," the cavalier said to him, "so make thyself comfortable. I need not say to thee to look well to our steeds. He is a good lad, this varlet of mine," he added, addressing Michael; "but he is sadly Scotch. I have often great difficulty in comprehending him."

"That reminds me, noble sir," Michael said, "of a rather singular circumstance which attended that which I have just recounted to your honor. A Scotch lad, one of the troopers, and one who seemed to be but newly come to the service, disappeared during the night, and took one of the horses, not his own, with him."

"A varlet, who, tired of brose and kail," the cavalier said, laughing, "has gone to taste the better fare of merry England. I faith, but he must be a youth of good taste, as well as good sense."

Macduff mumbled something which did not reach the party near the fire; and it was well perhaps that it did not—for the peroration sounded very like "pock-puddings."

The sound of horses' hoofs approaching the door again took Michael out. It was the leader of the troopers returned from his inquiries on the quay.

"I knew he lied, that scoundrel," he said to Michael, "he came from Dundee, not Berwick, in that craft. I am sorry he has escaped me; but he won't do so long. So soon as this conference at Hexham is over, I shall set my terriers in scent of this vermin. By Saint Margaret! but I wish I had taken him on board the craft yester even." He was now at the door of the taproom. "What, new arrivals? By my halidome, but I ought to know that cavalier! What, Sir Henry de Hastings here? Sir Knight," he added, drawing himself stiffly backward, "I did not look for thee leaving the royal train at such a time; least of all did I expect to find thee at a hostelry in Newcastle."

"Caprice, Gilbert, caprice," Henry de Hastings replied; "I asked permission of the king to visit some relatives in Durham, and I shall join him in two days at Hexham. You are here to prepare for the troops, I learn."

"Yes, Sir Henry," the captain replied; "and I fear, from what I see of the town, there is but poor accommodation for a thousand men. The nearer one gets to the English frontier the less one finds of necessary sustenance."

"Thanks to your countrymen on the border, Gilbert," Hastings responded; "these irregulars leave very little for the regular troops."

"They must be damnably ill off on their side of the hills," Gilbert rejoined, "to come wastes like these—unless it be to try and cover some of their own cattle, which the fishing reivers of the south come and help the selves to. If I were King of Scots—"

"What wouldst thou do, Gilbert?"

"I would build again the wall, which the Italian troopers constructed formerly from here to Carlisle, and not an English hound should be allowed to leap it," Gilbert said with bitterness, "so long as I was king of Scotland."

"You would require an army to garrison the wall, and one to defend the garrison," Hastings replied, with a sneer. "You might gather handful or two for this purpose, so long as your strongest places are garrisoned by Englishmen; but what could you do if they were recalled, as it is not unlikely they may be one of these days?"

The reply Gilbert would have given was interrupted by the entrance of some of the troopers who came to report progress to their commander; and as the main body arrived after, the whole day was occupied by the commander in receiving applications and issuing orders. Henry de Hastings was on board the Thistle for several hours; and when not engaged there, was reconnoitring the banks of the river, and taking special note of all localities. In the evening, the taproom of the Crown and Anchor was more crowded than usual, but chiefly with the Scottish troops, nothing passed of any importance among the persons in whom we are more especially interested. Early hours were then in vogue; and about the time when such houses at the present day begin to fill, the public room of the principal inn of Newcastle began to send for its customers, and ere nine o'clock, silence reigned, and sleep was supposed to reign throughout its recesses, and in the little chambers above.

Half an hour later, the door at which Malcom and his party had emerged opened, and Hastings and Michael Plummer were standing in the clear moonlight. The latter brought horses from the stable, and they rode off, taking the same road which Malcom had chosen the preceding evening. They did not observe that two others were following them on the same route.

On their arrival at the then fishing village of Shields, Michael shook all over, and had great difficulty in hiding his agitation. Hastings, when he saw the horse which Malcom had taken away, in the stable where he went to find accommodation for their steeds, but when he learnt that an old sailor had stolen him across, and when he heard from the individual himself that he had accompanied him to the verge of Marsden rocks, he could conceal his dismay no longer, and confessed to a knight that he feared, whatever might have

to Maelstrom, his own trade, of which he now made no secret to Hastings, was ruined for ever.

"Oh, never fear," Hastings replied, "that Maelstrom will allow himself to be outwitted by a Scotch boy. Depend upon it, that young rascal is provided for by this time."

Thus encouraged, Michael stepped with the knight into the boat; and although he saw another soon after leave the same quay, there were wherries so frequently passing at that ferry, that he paid little regard to the circumstance. When once fairly out to sea, both of the voyagers were too much occupied in looking out for the dark rocks to which they were bound, to observe that another boat was skulking in, under the shadow of the shore, and only now and then visible when the nature of the coast compelled it to come out at brief intervals into the moonlight.

The boat, with Hastings and Plummer on board, put in at the same creek where Malcom had landed, found Michael's boat there, and sent back the wherry. Through the same scenes they passed which Malcom had witnessed the night before; only that, on arriving at the largest group of rocks, Michael Plummer, instead of advancing to that castle-looking mass which stood in the sea, approached those on the right hand, and after ascending to some height by rude steps cut on the rocky wall, he struck at certain intervals on a part of the rock which sent forth a hollow sound, prolonged as it seemed, in the bowels of the earth. In a few minutes the creaking occasioned by the withdrawal of bolts was heard, and the rock itself seemed to open, giving access to a kind of low gallery, dimly lighted by a lamp, which a rough seafaring man, who let them in, carried.

"All well, Grimsby?" Michael demanded.

The answer was satisfactory, and they advanced.

The gallery widened gradually as they proceeded, gently descending until they found themselves in a spacious apartment, dimly seen at first, but soon lighted up by torches, which were always in readiness on the walls, or rather on the terraces, formed by the shelving rocks. These were so many, and so varied in form and height, that the full extent of the cave could not be easily made out. Between those low terraces or broad walls, casks, boxes, and various articles of trade were arranged in good order; and spears, bows, and other implements of defense, which found places of deposit on the higher ledges, showed that the amphibious race of merchants to whom the *magasin* belonged, or who had become forcible possessors of it, were prepared for the emergencies incidental to their lawless occupation.

"Let us have something to eat and drink, Grimsby," Michael said; "the long ride and the sea air have given me an appetite. Oh, Sir Knight, what say you to the proposition?"

"A very acceptable one, my worthy host," Sir Henry replied; "but had we not better first

"No, no; pardon me, noble Sir," Michael interrupted him with, in half a whisper: "that will require some little generalship on our part."

"Generalship? How, Sir Tapster—generalship with a fellow like that?"

"Hush, hush, noble cavalier," Plummer said slyly in an under tone, "he may be all you say, but remember we are in his castle; we must speak the lords of it fair, eh?"

Hastings could not conceal his dissatisfaction, but as Grimsby set out on one of the projecting rocks, a very comfortable-looking repast, and some flasks which bore external evidence that they had not been recent arrivals, his displeasure gradually gave way, and he not only submitted to the hail-fellow-well-met manner of his conductor, but even joined in some of his coarse mirth.

"I do not know, noble cavalier," Michael said, as he set down his second can; "I do not know how it is, but I always feel as if I was a different man here from what I am behind the desk; I have no accounts to worry me; no wife and niece to look over my shoulder all the day. Here, too, we sometimes have very merry parties. Now, for instance, when friars Anselme and Francis slip over from Tynemouth Priory there in fine weather—Lord love you, but we do keep it on—eh, Grimsby?"

"He hath a fine voice, Father Francis," Grimsby gravely remarked.

"For psalms, no doubt?" the knight inquired, with a look which set Michael in a roar, and extorted a smile even from his grim companion.

"Psalms, Sir Knight, Lord love ye!" Michael chuckled; "if thou heardest his *de profundis*, when he reaches the bottom of his can, it makes every empty barrel in the cave sound again. When he comes to confess my wife and niece, bless their hearts; how they would stare, eh? if he gave them either his *non nobis* or his *de profundis* as he gives them here. And then Father Anselme's story about his gossip at Cullercoats, whose wife is never frightened to go over the sands alone at night."

"Because she is protected by the saints, no doubt," Hastings remarked, with a look at Grimsby, which made that stoical individual's stool rock under him.

"Good, Sir Captain—Sir Knight, I mean," Michael roared, "good—we must have thee to meet them. Then there are our own fellows—although a little rough in their way, Grimsby, eh? That Hans is a perfect dare-devil—nobody but the captain can keep him in order."

"You would indeed require a captain of some nerve to keep a band in order with such stores beside them as you have here," Hastings remarked.

"Nerve, eh! that he has," Michael replied, "when Tom of Sunderland peached, Grimsby, and the hawks from the rival craft came down upon us in the other cave, who but Maelstrom could have—"

"Maelstrom!—what, is he your captain?"

Hastings inquired, and a dark shade came over his brow.

Michael felt that he had gone too far, and stammered out—

"That is to say, when—when—the captain—"

"Make no excuses, mine honest host," Hastings said, "it is nothing less than I expected. He has a nerve for any thing, as you lately most justly observed; but where is he, this noble captain of yours?"

"He is here," a voice called out of the obscurity, and an arrow whisked past Grimsby's ear, struck Hastings on a corslet hid below his doublet, and, glancing from it to his throat, sent him over with a crash on the floor.

A scream was heard at the same moment, and a female form was seen to rush out from behind one of the ledges of rock, and to bend over the prostrate form of the cavalier. Hastings seemed to have received a mortal stroke, but on raising him gently up he still exhibited signs of life; and as Michael Plummer held up the body, while Grimsby extracted the arrow, in order to give greater facility to the female to stanch, with a napkin, the blood which flowed in streams down his doublet—the host of the Crown and Anchor looked through an opening in the hood in which that female was enveloped, into the face of—his niece.

CHAPTER VI.

THE THREE KINGS.

THE town of Hexham—at that period the handsomest and the most flourishing not merely of Northumberland but of all border counties—was beginning to drop into a state of somnolence more resembling its present than its ancient character, when news were brought to it—through what channel, whether that of its chief butcher or chief baker, was never satisfactorily ascertained—that the Kings of England and of Scotland were to meet there to discuss matters of high import to both countries.

Who can describe the magical effect it had on all classes and on all coteries?—the glove shops were fitful—buff doublets rose: it was universally expected that henceforth at court there would be "nothing like leather," and no description of it comparable to "Hexham tan." King John was coming with his queen, Isabella d'Angoulême; the Lion-King was to be there with his queen Ermergard; David of Huntingdon was to be there with daughters for whom lances innumerable were to be broken; and the courtiers of both countries were to vie with each other in all that could do honor to chivalry or give gayety to a court. Hexham awoke out of its slumber into a state of feverish anticipation—the ladies looking forward to hearts, the churgeons to wounds.

The three remarkable remnants of antiquity in Hexham at the present day, formed at that time portions of its three principal buildings, and far-famed ornaments. There was, primarily,

that which has suffered least by the hand of time—its church or cathedral, one of the many ecclesiastical edifices which were indebted for their origin to the piety or fame of Saint Cuthbert. At the period of which we write, it certainly took the precedence of them all in extent, in beauty of architecture, and in saintly odor. It was the most inviolable of all the ecclesiastical sanctuaries in England; and if its chapel, now worse than in ruins, was not then existing, as some say, who walk by rule rather than by probability in such matters, we can merely remark, that, exquisitely beautiful as it must have been in its day, it is so detached from the main building that the general effect could not have suffered from its absence.

Besides its church, Hexham had then to boast of two strong and stately castles or Norman fortresses, fronting each other, in the very centre of the town; and as at that time each of those massive structures formed a side of the principal square or market-place, it would have been difficult to have selected a spot in the north of England more fitted for a royal conference—more admirably "laid out," in modern phraseology, for a meeting in which two monarchs and two courts were to confront each other—for purposes of amity.

Nor was it merely the internal appearance of the town which was to be admired. If the reader, who has not visited "the borders," will fancy a rich and diversified valley, extending eastward to Newcastle, and westward to the declining ridges of the backbone of England, with a branch turning northward, almost under the walls of Hexham, both branches of the valley—that in which the main stream of the Tyne, known as the South Tyne, flows; and that in which its tributary, the North Tyne, brings down its silver stream from the Cheviots—surrounded by distant mountains which gradually sink into lower eminences in the valleys themselves; on one of which rising grounds, near the confluence of the two rivers, Hexham stands—its dark towers and buildings rising in fine contrast with the cultivated valley and the wooded heights—some idea may be formed of the spot chosen for the discussion of the great question then pending between Scotland and England—the independence of the one, the rights of treaties and of conquests claimed by the other.

Such, especially, was the view obtained by the escort of the King of England, as it came from the south over the hill, which was then the boundary of the Scottish dominions; and for a brief space, John paused to point out to the courtiers around him the beauty of the scene.

"By'r lady," the monarch said, "this Earl of Northumberland, as our brother of Scotland delights to call himself, may well be proud of the title. Fairer dominions than those now before us are not to be seen in all the island. It would be well worth the loss of some of those barren, fortified rocks to the north, which yield us no profit, and some soldiers, who would be better employed

France, to have some of these valleys in exchange. It stands well, too, that city of the conference; and how the rogues have bedizened it out! Parbleu! but those tanners of Hexham do well to make the most of our royal visit: it is not every day they have two kings within those dark towers. I hope these frowning fortresses will not remind our brother of Scotland of his visit to our domains in Normandy. *Ours still, ventre bleu!* for all that Philip-Augustus may decree, and the Pope may proclaim to the contrary."

He here spurred on his steed, as was his habit when he lashed himself into a passion with recollections of his French losses; but the steepness of the path soon compelled him to slacken his speed, and the palfreys of the ladies of the court had to be led as they descended toward the town, where they were met and greeted by an immense concourse of the citizens, and by country people in their holiday attire, who came in from all quarters and from a great distance. A triumphal arch of flowers, having the blazonry and arms of England and Scotland, formed of roses and thistles entwined, had been reared at the southern entrance to the town; and from thence to the castle on the west, that nearest the church, the houses were decorated with evergreens, and the street strewn with flowers. The corporate bodies marched in goodly order, and maidens, robed in white and crowned with roses, formed an alley in front of the castle, through which the king and queen, dismounting, marched in procession at the head of their retinue, sumptuously apparelled. "It was a goodly sight to see," and all Hexham thought nothing like it could ever be seen again.

But its glories, great as they were, were almost forgotten next day in the splendors attending the entry of the court of the King of Scots. Their route had lain through Alnwick, where they had halted the previous evening. From Alnwick their road lay across the Tyne at Corbridge, where they were indebted to the Romans for the only bridge at that time existing on the Tyne, above Newcastle, and they had thus a considerable portion of the valley to pass through ere they could reach the city of the conference. Thus the cortège, which had gained great accessions during its progress southward, had room to form itself in perfect order before entering the eastern gate of Hexham, where a triumphal arch of flowers, similar to that which awaited the King of England, gave an equally expressive welcome to the King of Scotland, who, as Earl of Northumberland, had a double claim to their respect and homage.

A body of Scottish archers led the way, followed by the chancellor and his retainers, then came the high-constable and his gillies, as the *avant-couriers* of the king, who, with his brother, accompanying the queen and the other ladies of the court, were followed by a splendid cortège of *knights with their squires and heralds*. The procession was terminated by a body of High-

landmen on foot, who trotted at an equal pace with the cortège, even when at its greatest speed. All the Scottish dresses were in a style far more florid and imposing than that of the English display—having been borrowed in great part from the court of France, with which country Scotland was in constant alliance. With such a pageant filling the valley of the Tyne, one may fancy the enthusiastic welcome which rent the air along the banks of the river, and was echoed from the heights of Beaufort, and re-echoed from the towers of Hexham.

David of Huntingdon and his daughter being in the cortège, is a circumstance which, after what we have narrated, calls for some explanation. It may be briefly given. The queen, on recovering from the state of excitement into which she had at first fallen, was persuaded by the king that she had indulged in, at the moment, a pardonable, but in his view an unjust, suspicion of her royal relatives; and going from one extreme to the other, she now hid under an excessive degree of attention, the suspicions to which, internally, she was still a prey. Instructions had been given to the Scottish suite to hide, if possible, the sad event from the English courtiers, until the conference was over, as it was feared the knowledge of it might have an evil effect on the anticipated arrangements.

The cortège defiled into the market-place, the King of England and his company saluting it, as it passed, from the windows and balcony of their residence; while, with nearly the same forms as attended the arrival of the previous day, the castle, for the time being a palace, on the eastern side of the square was entered and taken possession of by the Scottish royal family. It was late in the day ere the last of the cortège had reached its destination; and the evening was devoted, as that of the previous day, to feastings and rejoicings among the people, to shows, mysteries, and all the usual ways in which a populace, determined to be amused, finds means of accomplishing its wishes.

While these rejoicings were going on without, there was a scene of a very singular nature taking place in a room at a remote part of the temporary residence of the King of England.

The Templar, Cavendish, and a man of a most noble mien, were seated before a blazing fire, with a small table between them, on which were two flasks of wine untouched. Cavendish was for the second or third time inviting the stranger to pledge him, and to take some refreshment, to which the other replied—

"I have already told thee, Sir Templar, that I neither eat nor drink until I fulfill that which hath brought me at this time to Hexham; and thy profession must needs have taught thee what it is to make a vow, and, above all, to keep it."

"I ask thy pardon, noble sir—for he must be of noble blood to whom I speak; but I regarded it not altogether in the light of a vow."

"The resolution of a knight and of a man of

honor," the stranger replied, "is equivalent to a vow."

"Well, then, Sir Stranger, let us go at once to the business upon which his Majesty sent me here to commune with thee. Thou canst give us information respecting some parties in whose fate we are deeply interested."

"On one condition," the stranger replied.

"Name it."

"That the son and heir of the King of Scotland be instantly restored to his parents."

"We know not yet if he be in our power," King John himself answered, stepping out from behind the arras.

"It is the evasive answer I expected from the usurper of the throne of Geoffroy of Anjou," the stranger said, rising up proudly, and casting a look of defiance, almost of contempt, on the king. John quailed under it for a moment, but he speedily resumed his usual calm look, although deadly pale, and rejoined—

"This insolence may not be unattended with danger, in the presence of the king himself."

"There can be no danger in the presence of monarchs who hold sacred their word, and who employ not, as agents, the murderers of the rightful heirs to the throne."

"I gave no free passport for language such as this!" John exclaimed, in a transport of rage; "one word more such, and we call our guards."

"Silence; John Lackland," the stranger said, with an air of authority as well as majesty; "were I but to speak the word before thy guards, as thou callest them, thy sceptre would crumble within thy grasp, as the vision of one that awaketh from a troubled dream."

The stately visitor opened the door himself, and walked forth unquestioned and unmolested. Not a word passed between King John and the Templar: they retired to their respective apartments, but not to sleep.

The next day, according to previous arrangement, the first part of the royal ceremonies was to consist in a visit to the church; but the weather, like the time and the tide, has no respect of persons, and pays no regard to royal pageants any more than to popular programmes. Very early in the morning the gray-headed sexton looked out of his little hovel, but shrunk back again as the cold spring rain battered on his bald pate. At a somewhat later hour he looked out again; but the rain ceased not, and the wind was wilder than ever. He opened the principal door of the church; but the wind was the only visitor, and it rushed in and roared and howled through the empty aisles. A few idle urchins came by-and-by, and the sexton, provoked that they should be the only congregation, drove them to seek for shelter behind the tombstones, where they stood shivering and shaking as they sent imploring looks to the hardened face of the door-keeper, not one of which reached his still harder heart. Ere long one or two straggling monks arrived, and shook their long garments, which sent streams of water over the well-swept pavement. Others

of the brotherhood began by-and-by to drop in in groups; and one of these, when they shook their cloaks, stood so near the celebrated stone figure with the club—the great wonder of the place, and the peculiar object of the care of the sexton—that the grim monster received a double portion of the watery element, and instead of looking as the guardian of the sanctuary, as he was commonly called, had the aspect of a poor savage, who had sought the shelter of the cathedral, after having been exposed all night to the pelting of the storm; and there it sat grinning in a more than usual ghastly manner on all who came to be spectators of, or to be participants in, the proceedings of the day.

The procession from the adjoining abbey, which was destined to receive and greet the two royal cortéges, and which made some attempts to form into line, had its ensigns torn to pieces, and the dislocated fragments of saints sent to flutter among the trees of the Seal. In the market-place no better fate awaited the procession there, and the endeavors to form into order often made, and as often defeated, were at last fairly relinquished; and the kings, with such cavaliers of their respective suites as were regardless of the weather, and were glad to exchange the cumbersome emblems of royalty and chivalry for habiliments suited to the state of the elements, went in very humble guise and order to the stately edifice. There were not wanting many of the citizens who followed their example; the priests found their way as best they could, and an hour after the time fixed, the church was tolerably well filled, and the service commenced.

The state of the weather without affected for a time the proceedings within, which went on heavily; but by degrees the weather moderated; the rain ceased entirely; the congregation became more numerous; the nuns arrived who were to take a leading part in the vocal and musical services; and by degrees also the ladies of the court found their way there, and dropped into their places like glimpses of sunshine. The sun itself, which had for some time been struggling among the clouds, broke through them, and suddenly shed its rays so abundantly through the high stained windows, that a scene burst on the view which has seldom been equaled for sublimity in any cathedral.

The temporary seats erected for the royal visitors had not been so high nor so numerous as to affect to any extent the unity and general effect of the building; on the contrary, the purple with which they were covered gave a richness to the general *coup d'œil*. The magnificent Saxon arches, grand in their simplicity, appeared to overshadow, with the dove-like curve of their embrace, the assembled multitude below—as, of old, the wings of the cherubs touched each other on the ceiling of the sanctuary: while the light open clerestory above them, from whence the choristers sent forth peel after peel of chants, coeval with creation itself, seemed a transcript in the skies of the scene passing below, and con-

veyed the idea of a worship connecting together the heavens above with the earth beneath; in a word, when the responses were given from on high, in tones alternately bounding through the lofty vaulted ceiling, or thrilling downward in soft cadences, which there was not a breath nor murmur to interrupt, in all the assembled multitude—there was not a heart untouched, not a mind that did not feel that it was a fit prelude to conferences on which the fate of nations and the happiness of thousands depended.

The kings met and interchanged salutations at the conclusion of the ceremony; and then went to prepare for the first of those interviews which were to be held in the town-hall, as on a neutral and independent spot of ground. It was to be almost of a private character, to which the highest officers of state, and the immediate personal attendants of the sovereigns, were alone to be admitted.

When the monarchs were seated, the officials standing around, John of England opened the conference thus:

"I have long desired thus to meet my royal brother of Scotland, that the weighty matters affecting the realms which the great Ruler of all has put under our sway, may receive our friendly consideration: not that I doubt the fidelity and ability which our trusty counselors display and exercise in such matters; but, as the worthy Father said to-day, the heart of kings is unsearchable; and much may be done, or at least more quickly done, when monarchs meet as we have done this day, than when these confer who must first consult us ere the propositions coming from either side can be accepted or ratified."

"I am quite of thine opinion, King of England," William replied. "It behoveth those on whom the care of kingdoms devolves, however that charge may have fallen into their hands, to consider the weal of those kingdoms as their first duty, and to lay aside all private feelings and opinions when they meet to consult for their welfare."

There was part of this formal rejoinder which was not exactly to John's taste; however, without seeming to observe it, he went on—

"That we lose not time in preliminary discussion, it appeareth to me that the occupation of the four principal strong places in the south of Scotland by English troops, having been found burdensome to England, and provocative to Scotland, it ought therefore to be the first subject for our consideration. There are not wanting those who will say that I think thus because France, backed by the Bishop of Rome, has espoused the cause of these brats of Geoffroy, and is still biting at my heels in Normandy. But we have troops enough to keep them at bay without withdrawing those that are in Scotland; and as for the chair of Saint Peter, by the road, he who fills it knows the value I put, *parbleu!* on his anathemas. No, William of Scotland, it is a desire to place the relation of the two countries on a firmer and

better basis than has existed hitherto, which has influenced me to seek this meeting—your noble brother, there, the Earl of Huntingdon, can vouch for my sincerity in regard to this—and I trust we shall not part until this desire of my heart is accomplished."

"We have, each of us, enough to answer for in regard to ourselves," William remarked, somewhat testily, "without becoming security for others; David, no doubt, knows more of courts than I do, and may be more ready to become security than I would be in a similar case. We each of us know best our own affairs. I am a plain-spoken man, John of England, who have known what it is to be betrayed by smooth words; and, therefore, mere words with me have very little weight—nay, I meant nothing offensive," he added more softly, seeing that a cloud came over John's usually guarded countenance; "I merely wished to say that the sooner we come to actualities the better. I wish to be quit of the English now in Scotland—I make no secret of my detestation of them—on what terms can I be freed of them? This, I take it, is the real object of our meeting here."

David of Huntingdon was about to speak, but King John, with a gentle wave of the hand, motioned him to silence, and replied:

"Pardon me, Earl of Huntingdon—I greatly admire and esteem this frankness of our royal brother of Scotland, and I shall not be slow in responding to it. He knoweth full well that only a part of the money agreed on for his ransom hath yet been paid up; and it was as caution for that money that the four fortresses were put into our hands. I can not abate from the agreed-upon ransom, but I am willing to accept different security. Your royal brother and mine hath fair domains here, which formerly pertained to our crown—"

"By Saint Cuthbert! but I thought so," William exclaimed, striking the table as was his wont, and seeming to address himself rather than any one else; "by his blessed bones, but I expected that he would try to replace Anjou by the valleys of the Tyne."

"My dear brother," the Earl of Huntingdon interposed, "let us hear fully the propositions of the King of England—it is but of security, you know, he speaks—it is not of lasting possession."

"True, David," the King of Scotland answered; "it was under the security of a truce that I was taken and sent over to France, and on that violation of a king's word was the charge for ransom made, for the full implementing of which possessions are now demanded in the name of security, and a pretext will soon be found to annex them to the crown of England in perpetuity. No, no, David," seeing he was about to answer—"if I must lose my paternal possessions in order to free my people and myself from the presence of those whom I detest, as I do falsehood, dishonesty, and fraud; for God's sake let him take them,

but let it not be done under the name of security. There is something to me sickening in the very sound of the word *security*."

And he looked at his brother with an expression of which many in the room knew too well the meaning.

"My royal brother," John said, "hath taken up my proposition too seriously; but when he spoke of the presence of those who are disagreeable to him, I doubted not that he alluded specially to one whom I see not in this assembly—whom I have not seen among the followers of the King of Scotland. May I ask the cause of the absence of Sir Henry de Hastings?"

"I know not," William replied; "he asked permission at Berwick to visit some friends in Durham, which I readily accorded, as may well be believed. He promised to be here in two days—three have elapsed, and he hath not yet appeared. I know not what hath become of him."

"It is somewhat singular," John said, musing, "to be absent at such a moment; I know not," turning to King William, "how to meet such suspicions as you injure us with. I feel, my brother, for what hath arisen to fret thy temper; yet why allow the past to prejudice thee against our poor offers to obliterate remembrance of it?"

"The best way to do so," William replied, abruptly, "is to wipe out the past itself. Withdraw thy soldiers; and if thou forgettest that a part of the ransom is yet to be paid, I will forget that a part hath already been paid: and my task is, I think, the harder of the two."

"That would be to acknowledge," John replied, with a half smile, "that we have been wrong in the past, which it would ill become our royal dignity to do."

"Thou wert not so difficult," William said, abruptly, "in the case of the monks of Canterbury—but Peter's chair, and the stone of Scone, are two different things."

"Brother, brother," David of Huntingdon said, imploringly, "it is not thus that good can come out of such a conference as this."

"Brother, brother," William replied, "if the truth is not to be found and spoken among kings, where is it to be found or spoken? If John of England abate not of his demands, which are unjust in their foundation, against Scotland, to what tendeth this meeting and all this parade? They but diminish our means of amassing the sum still demanded."

"Brother of Scotland," John replied, with his usual composure, "I am not here to diminish aught of that which has been fully agreed upon and covenanted between us; but I am here to try if means can be found to render the surety for its fulfillment less onerous on thee, and on thy kingdom. If thou art not willing to exchange our temporary possession of thy castles, for a temporary possession of these lands on which we have met, are there no others we may place before us in their stead? The Lord

High Constable here hath many fair provinces in the west, which thy bounty hath bestowed on him. They are too great for a subject—even one who hath allied himself to the throne. What saith Allan de Galway to relieve himself for a period of what must be onerous to him, and thus prove his gratitude to his king, and his regard for the country in which he holds, deservedly, so high a position?"

The Lord High Constable looked in utter perplexity at King John, and shuffled about in great agitation.

"Gracious sovereigns, and powerful monarchs," he said at last, "it is too great an honor which is proposed for a poor subject: and truly, King of England, thou formest too high an opinion of my humble possessions, which are more remarkable for their extent than for their value. Besides, your Majesties," he added, "they are for the most part lands which pertain to my dame, and I have not the power to pledge them, far less to allow them to be occupied by foreign troops."

"Thou seest, my royal brother," John said, with a bitter smile, "if thine own subjects on whom thou hast heaped so many possessions and honors, if they draw back at such a time, what canst thou expect the King of England, impeded not by a wife from doing what his own personal wishes might lead him to, but by a body of nobles who would break out into open rebellion, for which, *ventre bleu*, they are always too ready, if he abated aught of his pretensions over Scotland? Is there no way to be thought of—no hostage that can be offered? What sayest thou," after a pause—"what sayest thou to the heir of the crown himself?"

William arose with a start, as if stung by an adder, and walked toward the windows to hide his agitation. David of Huntingdon grew pale, and looked troubled and perplexed; and the others pertaining to the Scottish suite hung their heads.

"I can easily understand," King John said, "why it should at first cause a repugnant feeling that such a suggestion should be made; but consider, my brother of Scotland—think, David of Huntingdon, of the advantages which would arrive to the heir of the Scottish throne, by passing the years when the young intelligence begins to ripen—think of the advantage to him of being placed among the wisest and most learned men of the age, which now adorn our court and colleges; reflect on the advantage to a youth of his fair promise, as I understand him to be, to be brought up at the court of England: body o' me! but in lieu of this being a favor to confer on us, in return for the withdrawal of our troops—it is but another proof of our friendship for our brother of Scotland, and our regard for that kingdom which we may well look upon as our sister."

"King of England," the Earl of Huntingdon replied in a solemn tone, "this is too serious a matter to be considered of on the moment. Leave it to the reflection of my royal

brother. Permit me to make another suggestion for thy digestion, which, if thou favorest it, may save the repetition of a proposal which so deeply affects, as it well may, the king and the court of Scotland. I offer myself and my daughter as hostages to the King of England."

A silence of some minutes followed, which was broken by King John.

"Thou art as every David of Huntingdon, a good man, and a brave and a loyal one to boot—I would take thy word sooner than any bond. But, my good and worthy cousin, I have thee already—thy lands of Huntingdon are not on the borders, and can not be taken away by a band of reivers like those on which we are now met. And as for thy daughters, good earl, they are too lowly and too accomplished to be hostages—they would be married and become my lawful subjects ere the year were out. Is it not so, valiant knight?" starting up in great agitation, and addressing Moredun, who had involuntarily advanced toward the table, but instantly withdrew, his brow flushed with impatience and indignation; "Oh! I cry you mercy, Sir Nameless," John continued, striving hard to hide the alarm which the first sight of Moredun had occasioned him; "I thought thou didst mean to strengthen our poor argument. That reminds me, Earl of Huntingdon, I wish to hold some converse with thy daughter—not with *thy* wife, Allan de Galway, I leave thee to bargain for her lands, if that alone impede thy loyalty—it is with her, the next in succession."

"The Lady Isabella it is, doubtless, your Majesty meaneth," her father said.

"Thou hast it, earl; I had forgotten the name," the king rejoined; adding, as if to himself, "what can have occurred to this Henry de Hastings that he cometh not? I shall wait on the Lady Isabella to-morrow after the council, with the permission of her father and that of my gracious brother of Scotland, who still seemeth moved by the honest and good proposal tendered him."

William still kept his back turned to the table, but was evidently in a state of great agitation.

"And then, David of Huntingdon," King John went on, regardless of it; "there is another reason against our entertaining thy proposal. We have already trespassed too much on thy time, and withdrawn thee too much from the court and councils of thy brother. Thou knowest the confidence we have in thee and in thy sagacity. While thou art in the councils of thy brave but somewhat hasty brother—pardon me, William of Scotland, I feel as if I had a friend there, and that no feud can ever be deadly or lasting between our kingdoms."

William the Lion turned and walked with great dignity toward the council-table.

"John Lackland," he said, "if thy coming into Northumberland was for mockery and scorn, thou hast chosen an inappropriate spot and an inconvenient season. Thou hast, doubt-

less, heard of the dangers I have but yesterday, as it were, escaped, and of the loss I have sustained. Let me then say, in one word, that if it were to cost me my crown, far less my castles, I would not entertain thy proposition—no, not for an instant. If thy designs be against my crown and the honor of mine house, as thy words would imply, let thy consultations be held with David of Huntingdon and his daughter, not with William the Lion of Scotland. The council is for to-day terminated."

With a strict observance of all the formalities usual on such occasions, William and his suite went out, followed by the King of England and his train.

John, on returning to the palace, was immediately closeted with Cavendish. There joined them, out of an inner apartment, the chief of Glenorchy, who had arrived during the night.

"I have put them to the test," the king said, "on the subject of the young prince. Hastings certainly hath succeeded in his enterprise; but why is he now absent? And why tarrieth this Maelstrom?"

"Maelstrom hath arrived at Newcastle, your Majesty," Cavendish replied; "we learned that yesterday; although he had again left the place of appointment, we had hoped, for Hexham."

"Mine own agents fail me at the moment when their presence is of the highest importance," John said, in great displeasure; "and, in their place, there cometh unknown and unlooked-for visitants to menace and insult our person, even in the royal closet."

He paced several times across the apartment, as if to give his passion time to evaporate; then, turning to the knight of Glenorchy, he said—

"Thou art on the route to Scotland, Sir Douglas; it is well. Be it thy care, trusty chieftain, as thou goest to prepare the clans for a crisis which can not now be far distant, to take counsel with Errol, and to inquire into what hath passed at Scone. Send a trusty messenger with thy advices—thy friend the King of England will attend them with impatience, and he will place his confidence in them, as he hath ever had reason to do in the information and in the counsels of the knight of Glenorchy. Thou, Cavendish, haste thee with the morning dawn to Barnard Castle, to renew thy inquiries there; and do thy utmost to conclude them, and to bring me the result ere this comedy of conferences be terminated. And now, my lords, the banquet awaits us! I am grieved, Sir Douglas, that duty as well as policy calleth thee to the dull table of the Scottish court. The day is not distant, let us hope, when the Highland chieftain will sit at the right hand of the English king."

They were leaving the royal cabinet, when one of the attendants came to inform the king that John Manners, the squire of Cavendish, had arrived in haste from Sir Reginald Taunton. He was ushered in.

"What sayeth Sir Reginald?" Cavendish inquired, as he entered.

"He desireth me to say, with his humble devours to his Majesty," Mauners replied, kneeling before the king, "that he believeth himself to be now on the track of the fugitive; and that if the prosecution of that search should prevent his joining the royal councils at Hexham, he will assuredly not fail to lay the result before his Majesty on his way southward. I myself have learned, through a channel on which I can depend, that the child—"

"What of it?" the king called out involuntarily, in great agitation.

"That the child," Mauners continued, "was recognized, even when grown to be a blooming lad, somewhere in the neighborhood of Jedburgh, in Scotland."

King John trembled exceedingly, and turned toward the window. A profound silence reigned for some time in the apartment, which was broken by Cavendish addressing Glenorchy—

"I have been considering, Sir Dougal, since the arrival of Mauners, whether he might not prove a useful companion to thee on thy journey to the north; and the very important information he hath now given confirmeth me in this opinion. With his Majesty's sanction, and with thine own approval, I propose that he attend thee into the north, and that your route should be through Jedburgh, where he can examine into the truth of the information he hath received, and follow it up with further researches."

"I approve of the counsel Cavendish hath given," the king said, turning round, his voice still faltering, but all other traces of the deep emotion with which he was agitated having subsided. "And now it only remaineth that Sir Dougal Campbell instruct Mauners concerning the time and manner of their departure in the morning. The King of England again thanketh you all."

"Yet," he said, turning round, ere he had reached the door, "that the companion of the noble chief may be admitted to his full confidence as he is to ours"—here the king made a sign to Mauners to kneel; "and that we may mark our royal approbation of his zeal hitherto in our service—Rise, Sir John Mauners!"

And thus the Privy Council broke up.

Each of the monarchs held banquets that evening in their temporary habitations, where only their respective chiefs and nobles were present. At the Scottish table, the silence and sadness reigned which had characterized it since the night which brought so many griefs to the royal family: at the English table, John vainly endeavored, under a gayety bordering on riot, to hide a mind ill at ease, and an anxiety respecting Henry de Hastings, whose absence threatened to impede, if not to mar, all his projects.

Without, bonfires on the hills, and copious libations in the houses and tents, which the state of the streets, still wet after the storm, contributed to fill, bore witness that the citizens and country people participated not in the cares of their sovereign.

Thus the city Hexham "rejoiced and was glad;" but the kings of Scotland and England lay down on restless couches—the one dreaming of Moredun and Henry de Hastings, and the other of Isabella of Huntingdon and of his lost son.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SEAL.

THERE were to be games, feats of strength, and competitions in archery on the Seal, a field near the abbey, on the following day; and at early dawn that favorite resort was in a state of great bustle and activity; where the ornamenting of the royal stand, the placing of targets, the staking out of the ground, and the erection of tents were employing many hands, and engaging many more eyes. It was a spot admirably adapted for such exhibitions; there being rising grounds on three sides, which made it, as it were, the arena of a natural amphitheatre; while the view, from the royal stand in particular, toward the North Tyne, on which side the amphitheatre was open, formed a splendid background to the busy scenes about to be acted in the foreground of the picture.

Among the groups who were surveying the hanging of the tapestry around and in front of the royal stand, there was a Scotch lad—evidently Scotch, by his red hair, freckled skin, and open mouth—who seemed a very interested spectator of what was passing. He was in the midst of a clique composed of some girls, and two or three "blue bonnets, wi' dimples on their chin," who seemed amused with their companion.

"And wha pays the lawin for a' this?" he inquired.

"Which is the lawin, Sawnie?" one of the blue bonnets asked in return.

"My troth," Sawnie replied; "but ye are pretty companions for bonny lassies like thae, no to ken what the lawin means. Ye'll soon learn if ye tak ony o' them to ane o' thae tents. I wanted to ken wha pays the piper—do ye understand that? is't the Southren King, or the King o' Scots? That's plain Scotch, at ony rate."

"If they be Scotch pipers," another bonnet remarked, "there can be little doubt that it will be the Scottish King; but if it be the pipe o' the borders, it should be a common concern, I reckon."

"And a very sma' ane, too," the Scotch lad answered, with a laugh—"a very sma' sum should do for the bits o' whistles ye bla' on the banks o' the Tyne. If ye but saw them on the Tay, and heard Piper Tavish skirl on the sides o' Birnam, my certy, but ye might speak o' pipes."

"You're not far wrong, my lad," one of the girls said. "I heard a piper, called Macduff, once play at Alnwick; and I did not recover my hearing for a month."

"Ye heard Macduff!" the Scotch lad exclaimed, turning round, and almost taking her in his arms with delight—"my ain faither—ye heard my faither, did ye?—ay, ye did hear a piper, then; but Tavish gained the silver pipe ower his head by the influence o' Allan o' Galway, his mither's cousin; and my faither never got the better o't—it blew him out. Ay, but I am unco up i' the buckle to hae met here wi' ane that kent my faither—will ye go to ane o' thae tents and hae a crack? Come—dinna be blate, now—come."

"If one of my comrades here will go with me," the girl replied, "I don't care if I do."

One of her companions consented readily to accompany her, and the three trudged off together to one of the tents; where, after discussing all that the girl could recollect of Alnwick, and all that his companions were disposed to hear about Dunkeld, and Macduff's pipes—the son of Macduff asked—

"Wha is there to be in the tent besides the kings? For sae large a place as that they are fittin' up, there maun be a heap o' gentles."

"Oh, there's the Queen of England, and several ladies with her, besides the nobles and cavaliers of the English court. Then with the Scottish King, there will be his queen, poor lady, not looking well at all. She seems to be very melancholic. Then there is the king's brother, the Earl of Huntingdon, and his daughter, the Lady Isabella, looking almost as sad as the queen—"

"What! Macduff interrupted them with, "is the Lady Isabella really here? Then I maun try to get words wi' her."

"What is it you say?" the girl who had heard the piper, asked. "You must get words with her. Do you mean to say that a lad like you would dare to go near or to speak to the Lady Isabella?"

"It's as true as I'm here," Macduff replied, looking very important; "and if I canna get her spoken to, I maun try and get to the lug o' the King o' England."

"The Scotchman is out of his senses," one of his hearers said to the other, "we had better not remain with him, Mary, we may get into some trouble."

"No," Mary replied, "I will not leave him; he seems in earnest, and he may have a message from some one of importance to deliver."

"It is not likely, Mary: how could any one think of trusting a message for great folks like them, to a simple lad like that?"

"I'm no quite sae simple as ye think, hinny," Macduff replied, looking a little proud; "and gif ye had been where I was twa nights ago, and saw what I saw, ye would think that speaking either to a lady or a king was naething after it."

"And what was it?" both called out at once.

"Ay, that's telling!" Macduff answered, "my bonnie birdies, ye maun rest content to ken naething about it; but if you, Mary—it's a bonnie name Mary, and ye seem the frankest of the twa—and besides, ye kent my faither—if ye can

contrive that I can get as near the Lady Isabella as but to say twa or three words to her, ye'll find nae disadvantage, maybe some advantage by it, and ye will find that Tam Mucduff doesna blaw whar there's nae peats to burn."

"I can not well imagine how to bring it about, Tom, but we shall try; and the first thing to be done is to get places as near the stand as we can, and the sooner the better, for the crowd is beginning to gather."

Tom, after paying "the lawin," which he said he thought every one who had been within a public-house or a tent must know the meaning of, accompanied his two belles to the bustling scene, and they took up a position so close to the stand or tent, that they could not only see all who might occupy it, but hear all that passed within it. The crowd was, as usual in such cases, employing the time in remarks on the absent, as well as those who were present.

"No lack of Scotsmen here to-day, I think," a stout yeoman remarked to one who had the bustling air of a tavern-keeper; "they are always very glad of an excuse for coming south. It is better, however, that they come this way by day, than in the night, to steal our beeves. I wish those crowned heads would contrive some means of guarding the borders, or of roosting out the nests of hornets who find refuge on the north of the Cheviots."

"Oh, they come not so often now," the inn-keeper answered, "and, in some respects, I am sorry for it. If they were a little free-and-easy among the cattle, they always paid their way very honestly in the public-house; and then they drank so hard; bless your heart, Wilburn, three Scotch drovers in the Blue Lion room, drank as much as the four friars in the Green Dragon. But what lads have we there in green—that's a new cut, and a little above the common?"

"By my halidome," Wilburn answered, "they are, if I mistake not, some of those Ettrick lads, that are fonder of hunting ower the Reed water fells than killing their ain mutton on the other side. They are getting bold upon our hands those chaps; I never saw them so far south before. But there's Father Clement gone up to them—I se stake my dame's best kirtle, but he'll claw their heads for them."

"Wait a minute here, and I'll go behind them and hear what passes," the host of the Golden Star, which presided over the rooms of the Blue Lion and the Green Dragon, said, as, advancing quietly a few paces, he placed himself at the back of the group they had been talking of. As he neared them, the first words he caught were those of the friar.

"Two merks, not one plack more."

"Nay, saintly father," one of the men in green replied, "consider the risk. The nearest we can bring one down is at Woodburn, and then we have both the north and the south Tyne to cross before we can reach the abbey."

"Could you not meet with one about the Stagshawbank, and bring it over by Corbridge?"

"Sure to meet some of the Prudhoe people, either on the one side or the other. No, holy father, we shall bring a good fat buck to the abbey door for two merks—not a plack less—and we would not that our chief knew, nor for all the merks in your coffers."

"Ah! we have very few there, my pretty man," the friar responded, with a sigh; "else I should not stickle about the price. Bring it, natheless, about the hour ye wot of, and we won't be too hard with you."

The innkeeper returned, laughing to his companion.

"You were right in thinking that Father Clement was trying to bring them down a bit, these gay jockles—perfectly right—but it was to bring down the price of a fat buck they are to shoot at Woodburn, and bring over by night to the abbey."

"Woodburn!" the yeoman exclaimed, "why, it's on my own grounds. I shall see to their drawing their bows there, I se warrant ye."

"Take care that you yourself are not the fat buck they hit, Wilburn; these lads are not very scrupulous in the marks they aim at—and they seldom miss. But see! the great folks are coming; let us stand firm."

Macduff and his female companions were close at their back, and Mary said, in a low voice, to Tom—

"Let's listen to what Boynton of the Golden Star sayeth to this farmer; Boynton knows every body, great and small."

"These English bowmen who form the line there," Boynton remarked to his companion, "and who keep a clean path for the procession, seem to feel like hunters when they have a pack-saddle thrown over their backs for the first time. Most of these men were in Palestine with Richard the Lion-hearted, and now his false-hearted brother—"

"Hush, hush!" Wilburn said, "speak not thus. Thou knowest not who may overhear us."

"You are in the right, perhaps," Boynton answered; "but it chafes me to see those brave men, who have, many of them, visited the holy sepulchre, and who bear the marks of hard service in foreign lands, to see them set like serfs to sweep a path for a piece of idle pageantry. Ah! see there how the Earl of Leicester, Simon de Montfort, the first in the procession, bears himself—that man has mischief in his very look. They say that he and William Marshall, the Earl of Pembroke, who is at his side, are rival suitors for the hand of one of the king's daughters—that one, the youngest, immediately behind the queen."

"Why, she ain't fit for marrying yet, and won't be for some years," Wilburn remarked; "even the other beside her, who seems older, is little more than entering her teens, I should think."

"Man, that makes no difference at court, don't you know?" Boynton replied; "they arrange all these things for them, while they are but bairns, that they may have no will of

their own when they get ripe. Something has fretted King John; he is trying to look very gay, but he turns every now and then to address a word to the queen, as if he would bite her nose off. I rather think that Isabella d'Angouleme has a temper of her own, and that she does not put up very easily with all the tantrums of her consort. Those knights that follow them form but a poor escort for an English monarch; but the best of the class fell with his brother abroad; those who returned stink in his nostrils, and he in theirs; and his barons and he generally are not on the best of terms."

"I do not see a prelate," Wilburn remarked, "in all the English procession."

"A prelate!" Boynton said, in a very low voice, and looking rather more grave than usual. "May the saints guard us, Wilburn! don't you know his kingdom is under excommunication, and that a priest would sooner be tied to the tail of Satan than follow King John in a procession. A priest can exorcise Satan, but the whole body of them, with the Pope at their head, can make nothing of the King of England—he puts the letters of the Pope into the fire, and threatens to throw the holy men who bring them to him in after them. But, see, the Scottish bowmen are entering the Seal. I like the light dress of these lads better than the heavier equipment of the English. Nay, but these two ancients who go before the king are but shabby-looking specimens of a court."

"Mary," Macduff remarked to his female friend on his right, "that first loon after the archers, that one nearest us, is Allan o' Galway, the sneekdrawer that favored Tavish, and cost my father his life. I should like to get grips o' him abint Ben-y-Gloe. I wud gie him something his young wife wouldna mak muckle main for—the crabbit auld sinner!"

"But, dear me, Tom," Mary said, taking hold of his arm, and getting on tiptoe, "but the King of Scots, our brave earl, looks very sad, and his fine lady too; oh! but it makes my heart sad to see a queen like that, holding herself so stately, when ye would think the tears were just coming into her eyes."

"And she has had reason to greet, gin ye kent a', Mary, lassie," Macduff replied.

"What was it, Tom—what has happened to make them all so dispirited?"

"Wheesh, lassie, wheesh," Tom said, speaking very low, "this is neither time nor place for siccan a story o' dule and sorrow. Ay, ye said true, lassie, ye said true; there is the Lddie Isabella wi' her father, poor thing! thae een o' hers were aye dark—but, wae's me, they are sunk deep deep—and thae bonny cheeks were aye pale; but, keep's a', they're the very color o' death itself. I maun hae her spoken to—it's no muckle hou—p—but it's aye better than naething."

"Will ye not tell me what it is, Tom?" Mary said entreatingly.

"Mary, ye're a bonny lassie, and a gude too,

I believe," Tom replied, in a confidential whisper, "and the day may come when ye sall ken—but no eenow—no eenow."

"And who is that stately knight, and bonny, behind her, Tom?" Mary inquired; he seems thoughtful, too, like the rest of them; but he's a fine-looking lad."

"That's the knight o' Moredun, Mary," Tom answered; as brave a cavalier as there is at a' the Scottish court. But there's some story about him—naeboddy kens what it is exactly—some say that he comes on the wrang side o' the blanket—ithers that he has nae birth at a'; naeboddy kens, in short, what to mak' o' him—his maister and mine—but wheesht, wheesht, bairns; the Englishers are comin' into the stand, and we maun keep as quiet as pussy."

By an arrangement, originating with the English King, the younger branches of the royal families had seats in the front of the stand, their attendants being on each side. The monarchs themselves, and their queens, had higher seats behind them; and the courtiers and cavaliers were ranged all around. In this manner, the Lady Isabella was placed immediately before King John; and it was observed that he addressed much of his conversation to her, and to her father, who was immediately behind him. Whether this was meant out of pique for what had passed at the council-board the day before, or was merely accidental, William of Scotland could not determine; but he inclined, naturally, to the former opinion.

The sports now began; and the day being fine, and every thing going on well, the countenances of the royal party began gradually to brighten up a little, as they became more and more interested in the proceedings. In that interest, the son of Macduff, the piper, partook so largely, that he seemed to have forgotten the purpose which, according to his own account, had enrolled him there as a spectator.

When it came to the turn of the archers, the Englishmen, whose bows were longer than those of the Scots, and their arrows heavier, had evidently the advantage at long distances; and the acclamations of the spectators, in testimony of it, was highly pleasing to the English monarch.

"The Lady Isabella must own," he said, bending forward, "that if in some of the sports our English yeomen can not equal in agility your lithe-limbed Highlanders, they excel them, and even your Lowlanders, in the manly exercise of the bow."

"We aim neither so far nor so high in our poor country," the Lady Isabella recommenced, when, observing a shade come over the countenance of the king, she added—"nay, your Majesty, I had no figurative allusion in what I said; I but meant, that in our narrow valleys, and in our mountain passes, light implements and light accoutrements are more suited to the nature of the country than in England, with her wide plains and gentle eminences."

"It was perhaps the length of the aim which

sent them beyond the mark in France," King William, who was within hearing, remarked to De Bosco.

John affected, not to hear it; but he bit his lips, and kept silence longer than usual.

As the acclamations of the crowd were again rising when an English archer sent his shaft right into the centre of the bull's eye, one of the "lads in green," who had been remarked by Wilburn and Boynton earlier in the day, fought his way through the crowd, entered the lists, and after bowing respectfully toward the royal stand, selected an arrow from his quiver, poised it carefully, placed it on its rest, and seemingly without much effort, and with an appearance of great indifference, drew it to its head, and sent it right upon the last shot arrow, cleaving it in two. In the midst of the deafening shouts which arose on the performance of this feat, the other "green man," following the example of his companion, took aim with the same careless bearing, and in his turn split the shaft of his brother-in-arms.

"Who are those young men, brother of Scotland?" John said, addressing King William, "they are wondrous like some of those fellows of Sherwood's forest, to whom my brother of valiant memory was foolish enough to grant an amnesty."

"In truth I know not," William said; but addressing Moredun, he added, "order one of thy men to bring these archers before us here, to receive the prize they have so well gained."

A man-at-arms accordingly went, and after apparently some difficulty, persuaded the two young men to advance in front of the royal tent. It was the part of John to award the prizes; it was he therefore who addressed them as they made obeisance to the monarchs.

"You have well gained this silver arrow, young men," King John said; "but ere I bestow it, tell me first, what countrymen are ye?"

"Noble king," the younger replied, "we are of none."

"What mean ye?" the king demanded hastily.

"Where dwell ye?"

"On the Cheviots," was the answer.

"In England or in Scotland?"

"It is for your Majesties to settle that question," he in green replied.

"Somewhat too bold, methinks, Monarch of Scotland," John said, addressing King William; then turning to the archers—"What sovereign obey ye?"

"We obey our chief."

"What king acknowledgeth your chief?" John demanded.

"He acknowledgeth, in courtesy, all rightful sovereigns," was the reply.

"King of Scotland," John, much chafed, said, turning to William, "this ought not to be;" then, resuming his questions—"Who is your chief?"

"We know not."

"How now, pert Sir, ignorant of thine own chief?"

"We know neither his country nor descent."

"Where is he to be found?"

"In his own castle, when not in thine."

"His name?" John shouted, his choler now boiling over.

"Thou shouldst have asked himself, yester even."

The King of England could bear this no longer; and, rising, he called out to the men-at-arms, while he visibly trembled as all eyes were inquiringly fixed on him—

"Seize these men."

But the two archers, gliding through the crowd, no one seeking or daring to stop them, gained the other side of the Seal, which terminated abruptly there by a deep cutting for a road, not visible from the royal tent.

"Men-at-arms, follow and seize them!" the king shouted again.

The man who had had them peculiarly in charge, now moved rapidly toward them, and others were following him, when both the archers, stopping on the verge of the deep cutting, turned, and sent each an arrow right through the casque or bonnet of their pursuers—calling out at the same time,

"The next that followeth us, it shall be to the heart."

Leaping down, they were so suddenly out of sight, that it seemed from the royal pavilion as if they had sunk into the ground; and the search which followed, on the part of the men-at-arms, was totally fruitless—none of them venturing to take the same leap; and it is believed to this day, that so far from being frightened at what had passed, the promised buck was faithfully brought to the abbey gate, a few nights afterward; and that Father Clement, and its bearers, instead of paying and receiving money, drained more than one flask each to the health of the "three kings"—meaning thereby their own chief, and the monarchs of England and Scotland.

While John was still chafing under this discomfiture—for he considered it, and so did the crowd, nothing else—he observed a young man forcing his way with very little ceremony until he stood close under where the Lady Isabella sat; his head being only a little above the board, covered with tapestry, on which she leaned, surveying, with marked interest, the scene which was taking place.

"My leddie, my leddie," Macduff said, trying to raise his arm, either for the purpose of touching the lady, or of taking off his bonnet.

"My leddie, my Leddie Isabella," he repeated; but the crowd made a great noise, and the Lady Isabella had eyes and ears for nothing but what was passing at the other side of the Seal.

"What is it—what meaneth this insolence?"

King John said, partly addressing the intruder and partly the guards who stood right under the stand, pressed into very small compass by the crowd.

"Noble King, Sir Henry de Hastings," Macduff began.

"Not another word, on your life," the king said hastily; adding, "Guards, bring round this young man, and give him in charge to Conrad. Conrad," he said, in a low tone, bending over to an attendant who was among the crowd at the back of the stand, "take the young man—a young red-haired Scotchman, whom the guards are bringing round there; take him to my private room. Give him something to eat and drink—but neither speak to him thyself, nor permit any to approach or hold converse with him. Quick! King of Scotland," turning to William, "we have seen enough for one day. Heralds, marshal the procession! Lead the way, Leicester!"

And the procession returned in the same order to the two palaces, and John, King of England, hastened to hold conference with the Scotch boy.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRIVATE CONFERENCES.

The confusion in front of, around, and within the royal stand was so great at the time Macduff was taken into custody, that his arrest excited very little observation save on the part of his companion, Mary, who had followed him in his advance, and did not leave his side even when he was transferred from the custody of the men-at-arms, and led off by the servant in royal livery. Macduff had sufficient presence of mind, in spite of the perplexity into which the suddenness of the affair had thrown him, to whisper to her—

"Mary, my bonny lassie, whatever comes o' me, gang to the knight of Moredun, that bonny chield ye was noticif, and tell him to set aff, as if the deil was at his shanks, for the Crown and Anchor at Newcastle and Marsden Rocks."

"No talking there, my young man," Conrad said, who had just come out of the tent; "not even to your sweetheart. Come with me—quick."

"It's an awfu' thing no to get leave to claver a bit, even wi' a lassie," Macduff attempted to say, but the attendant stopped him with—

"It is the order of the king—the King of England himself."

"He may be King o' Palestine," Macduff recommenced, but this was an unlucky word.

"It will be safer for thee to hold thy peace," Conrad said, "and there was good reason, methinks, to stop thy mouth, if it be to utter such words that thou openest it. I tell thee, once for all, to keep silence and speak to no one. No harm will come to thee if thou art obedient; but transgress once more, and instead of using thee well, as the king directed, I will thrust thee between naked walls."

The sound of an order to treat him well, appeased some of the wrath of the son of the piper, and he went on rather more readily, but still with misgivings. When he arrived at the gate

of the palace, and saw Mary following at a little distance, he said to his conductor—

"I say, man, ye seem an unco honest kind of a chield, and I daresay have had a sweet-heart o' your ain sometime or other. Just let me say twa words to that bit lassie—I'll say them here, ye may hear them a'—I'll no seek to gang near her."

"Say them quickly, then," Conrad replied, "and let us go in."

"Mary, my gude lassie, ye'll no forget me?" Macduff said, and, in the words of Ossian, "the eyes of the son of the piper were moist." "And ye'll mind what I telt ye?"

Mary said nothing, but her gesture spoke volumes, and Macduff went into the palace more content.

"It's a curious thing," he said to himself, as Conrad ushered him into a handsome apartment, "it's a queer thing that, ance in a day, I would ha' been unco proud to ha' been shown into a room to meet a king, but noo, I dinna ken hoo it is, I wad rather be on the tap o' Schihallion in the mids of a mist than here."

Even as he ate and drank of the good things set before him, Macduff did not feel at all at ease; and when King John entered, the morsel he was attempting to swallow fairly stuck in his throat, and he changed color, not more through agitation than in his attempts to force it down.

"Finish thy repast," the king said; "I can wait."

"I wouldna think of such a thing," Macduff said, forcing the morsel at last down, pushing his chair back, and standing awaiting the king's orders.

"You had a message for the Lady Isabella of Huntingdon," the King of England said.

"I had something to say to her, at least," Macduff replied.

"It is the same thing," his Majesty said; "you may tell it here."

"I'm no just sure, wi' deference to your Majesty," Macduff answered, "that it is precisely the same thing when it's a leddie ye have to speak to."

"Bandy no words with me, varlet!" John said; "remember in whose presence thou art. What hadst thou to say to the Lady Isabella?"

"I had better, maybe," the lad replied, "aye wi' deference to your Majesty, tell what I had to say to yourself?"

"To me! This is singular," the king muttered; "say on, boy."

"My maister and your servant," the boy answered, "that is the knight o' Hastings, is in a strait, and would like to see either the Leddie Isabella or your Majesty."

"This is most singular," the king muttered; and then said aloud to Macduff, "Where, sirrah, where have you seen him? Where have you left him?"

"I left him, your Majesty, at a queer place that I dinna ken the name o'," Macduff replied.

"Why, what was he doing? How is it that

he comes not himself? What mean you by his being in a strait?" the king inquired, rapidly.

Tom, seeing by the manner of the king, and guessing by his being prevented speaking to the Lady Isabella, that he must be very cautious in what he said, replied—

"He gaed off on some wild-goose kind of an expedition frae—frae—Newcastle, I think, was the name o' the place—no, it wasna Newcastle, it was faver on—I daresay it was Durham, but I'm no very sure. Wherever it was, he sent for me; and, when I gaed to him, there he was, poor man, wounded in the neck, if I'm no mista'en. He was sayin' a great deal o' nonsense, but frae what I could mak' out, he had carried off or sent somebody owre the seas or murdered them, and he wanted to see your Majesty or the Leddie Isabella. There's my wallet o' news, and I'm glad to be quit o't—I'm no just gleg at the uptak—in particular, when folk dinna seem very weel to ken themselves what they are saying or what they would be at," and Tom gave a long and a very natural sigh. He did not get off, however, as he hoped; for the king, who remained some time quiet and in a very thoughtful mood, at last demanded—

"Could you guide any one to where you left Sir Henry de Hastings?"

"I could try," was Macduff's answer.

The king instantly called the attendant, and said—

"Conrad, I consign this young man again to thy charge. See that he want for nothing; but that he be well-guarded, and that no one approach or talk to him. Dispatch a messenger quickly across to the King of Scots, to say that I come to pay my promised visit; and send Leicester to me."

Macduff was taken away, looking very doleful. The Earl of Leicester came, with whom the king held a long private conference; and then, with only two attendants, whom he left at the entrance-hall, John crossed the square to the temporary residence of the Scottish monarch, where, demanding an audience of the Lady Isabella, he was ushered into a room where that lady sat, with two of her attendants, waiting the expected interview.

After saluting her with much ceremony, John intimated his wish to speak to her in private, and the attendants withdrew.

"I come to speak to the Lady Isabella," he said, "as to one worthy of the confidence of a king; and I will speak to her with the frankness which one so worthy is entitled to. There have been, doubtless, many suitors for the favor of the Lady Isabella at the Scottish court"—the color rose even in the pallid face of the young lady at these words, but it quickly faded away as the king went on to say—"I have deeply regretted that thy father, lady, could not, for reasons best known to himself, have transplanted so fair a flower to our poor court at Windsor. In adopting the only substitute for this, which I could devise, that of sending one of the ornaments of the English court to wait on the Scot-

tish monarch, I ventured to hope that Sir Henry de Hastings' acceptance of a position there, so far from worthy of his deserts, will not have hid them from the observation of one whose natural shrewdness must have made her fully alive to the nature of her position, so near, so very near to the throne of Scotland."

"Noble king—" the Lady Isabella attempted to reply; but her visitor went on.

"I came not, fair lady, to be thine interrogator, nor to ask avowals which even a king hath not the right to exact. But I came to see thee thus alone, that I might fulfill a pledge given to Sir Henry de Hastings, which I had hoped he would have been here himself to have heard me implement. I fear, lady, from accounts brought me by a messenger, sent to inquire after his welfare, that it is illness, serious illness, which has prevented him being present at our conferences with thy royal uncle."

"King of England—" the Lady Isabella again attempted to reply; but again John interrupted her.

"I am called from hence suddenly," he said; "but I can not go without placing before the Lady Isabella her true position, and what the world will expect of her. Thy father, lady, is much esteemed at our court; and to him and his family all look as the bond which is to cement the two countries together, and to bring to a termination those discords which have inflicted such deep wounds on both kingdoms. Of none in his family are such expectations formed as of the lady I now address; and if I speak to that lady of the merits of an English cavalier, of high rank and accomplishments, I do so as to one who will not allow herself to fall a prey to any needy adventurer—"

"Sir King," the Lady Isabella said, at the same time rising proudly, "if I do indeed occupy the high position you deign to ascribe to me, it ought at least to protect me—"

"From insults of this nature," the king added, with one of his softest smiles; "from attacks like this, thou wouldst have said. Be it so, lady; but when the welfare of nations is at stake, it is needful to speak plainly. I address not the Lady Isabella as I would a child—nor do I look for such a repulse from her as I would from one who is afraid of losing a favorite toy. Nay, lady, I came here to be heard, for I speak the language of a people. Thine uncle is suspicious of all our *démarches*, and on thee and on thy father, lady, rests the lengthening out into a peace, or the breaking up of the trace now existing between England and Scotland. It is necessary, from the state of the relations of England with other countries—even with Wales itself, and Ireland, as well as France—that either a peace, not likely to be soon broken, be concluded with Scotland, or that the army I have ready in the centre of my dominions be directed northward, to secure the subjection of that country, ere I turn my hand against the others. I have one essay still to make with

King William, and to him I go, on leaving thee now—for the urgency of my affairs admits not my waiting the tedious formalities of public discussions. But even if I be successful in that mission—of which I have but slender hopes—it can not have any thing but a temporary effect; and the strengthening of the alliance between England and the branch of the royal family of Scotland, of which thou art the ornament and the hope, is that which alone can give me confidence, in withdrawing my troops from the north, and in directing all the energies of my kingdom against other foes—contemptible in themselves, but bold through the countenance given them by the arch-politician who now fills the chair of Saint Peter.

"Lady Isabella," the monarch went on to say, "I speak not to thee as I would to other females of our court. I know enough of thy noble mind, which partakes so much of that of thy father, to abstain even from the supposition, that one placed as thou art, at this moment, can hesitate when the welfare of kingdoms is at stake. I ask no pledges—I extort no promises. I show thee thy true position, and I trust thee."

King John said these last words with great emphasis, and went out, not waiting for any reply. He directed his steps toward the apartments of King William, into one of which he was ushered, where that monarch sat reading; the queen was at the other end of the apartment, occupied in embroidery, along with the ladies of her suite.

"Pardon me, my royal brother; and Madam, my sister," John said, on entering, "for not waiting the usual hour and forms of conference; but, in truth, I have received advices of matters which are too urgent in their nature to admit of my remaining longer at Hexham; indeed, I fear I shall have to leave it this very day."

King William did not look at all displeased; but John, not seeming to observe his looks, went on to say—

"I can not think of relinquishing the object which gave rise to this present meeting. Sorry I am, Madam," addressing the queen, "that your royal husband should have put an evil interpretation on all our honest endeavors to bring about an alteration in the present relations between the two countries, dishonorable to neither, and advantageous to both."

"Would it have been either honorable for me, or advantageous for Scotland, to have relinquished in thy favor these my possessions in Northumberland?" William asked, with a calmness he could not maintain at the previous conference; although his voice quivered as he added, "the other proposition was aimed at my very heart."

"It was only a temporary possession as surety," John replied, "as my royal brother knoweth full well. But I come not here to renew propositions so ill received; I come unattended, and I rejoice to find thee alone, to make one

further attempt to heal forever our unhappy divisions—but I come alone, because it is a matter personal in its nature, and which concerneth William of Scotland and John of England personally and individually. May I ask, Madam,” addressing the queen, “that the ladies in attendance withdraw?”

As the ladies were leaving the apartment, the queen looked toward her husband, as if to inquire whether she should withdraw also—both monarchs signed to her to remain.

“I am desirous of thy presence, Madam,” King John said, “inasmuch as the proposition I have now to make to my royal brother is one which toucheth all our family interests.”

William and his queen looked at each other with trouble and anxiety in their countenances. John, not seeming to remark it, went on—

“I proposed yesterday to my royal brother, that the heir to the throne of Scotland, in being permitted to grace our court of England with his presence, might be there as hostage for the entire fulfillment of the treaty, as yet only partially fulfilled, between the two nations. I saw how it troubled his Majesty—I see how it troubles his gracious mother at this moment. Pardon me, if I have found it necessary again to allude to it; it was but to give me the opportunity of saying that I depart from it altogether, and that it shall not again be mentioned.”

The king and queen of Scotland looked as if a load were removed from both their minds; William, however, still eyed John with great anxiety, and thus proceeded—

“It hath ever been found that nothing contributeth so much to strengthen the relations between two countries—especially countries so closely allied by nature as our dominions—that nothing is so calculated to remove causes of discord, or to shorten the occasional feuds that may, from time to time, arise between them, as alliances by marriage between those nearly connected with the royal families of each realm. It was with this feeling, and in the hope that something might arise out of it, conducive to an object so near to my heart, that I sent to the Scottish court one so highly accomplished and so nearly allied to our royal line as Sir Henry de Hastings.”

King William here started to his feet, and was beginning to call to his aid “Saint Samson and all his virgins,” when the queen advanced, laid her hand on his arm, and said—

“My dear husband, be not so moved. If thou hast been chafed by the presence of an English knight in thy household, remember that it was demanded by reasons of state; and that in no respect hath the noble cavalier, sent by his Majesty here, acted unworthy of his mission, or of his high lineage. If sometimes his looks were not those calculated to render his presence acceptable in thy council-chamber, remember that, in words, he never injured the presence in which he stood.”

Queen *Ermergard* had great influence with her hasty consort, who, resting himself with

his queen at his side, allowed John to proceed thus:

“I’m indeed sorry, if even in looks Sir Henry hath in aught made his presence unacceptable to my royal brother; but let it be remembered that his position was not so elevated as his birth would have entitled him to near our own person; and besides, that sentiments of jealousy may not unfrequently have mingled themselves with national feelings—for he could not be the only suitor for the favor of a lady so highly gifted by nature and by cultivation as the Lady Isabella of Huntingdon.”

King William murmured something, which fortunately was not audible, and John went on—

“I fear, from what hath this day reached me, that it is illness which has prevented Sir Henry de Hastings from being present at this our conference, when he could himself have pleaded his own cause; and I doubt not, from what has passed even now between the Lady Isabella and myself, that he would have accompanied me to this chamber to ask the permission of my royal brother to appear henceforth as the accepted suitor of the Lady Isabella of Huntingdon.”

The countenance of the King of Scotland had grown darker and darker in its expression as King John proceeded, until at this point all the looks, gestures, and efforts of the queen were ineffectual in restraining him; he arose, and walking up and down the apartment in great agitation, alternately muttered and exclaimed—

“Still that family—still it is my own brother, in whom I confided as in a rock, impregnable to every attack. O David, David! that from thee these blows should come. King of England! take my lands—take my crown—take all; but oh! take not from us the honor of our family—deprive me not of the feeling I had of confidence in mine own brother—in him whose wisdom, prudence, and attachment were the rocks on which I placed my dependence in all the storms that have burst over me; in whom I confided even when a prisoner in a foreign land, and the victim of a fraud as base as it was unworthy of the—monarch who practiced it.” He uttered these last words slowly and emphatically.

John allowed him to exhaust his passion, and then went on with his address.

“I can not see, brother of Scotland, why it should be thought a thing strange with you, or one which ought to shake thy confidence in thy noble brother, David of Huntingdon, that we seek alliance with his honored family and race. I do not disguise from thee—I never have disguised, that he is a friend of England—that he hath the interests of that country at heart, in which he hath such large possessions, and that he thus seeketh, by all his means and influence, to promote a good understanding between the two countries.”

“Why is that influence exercised on me and

hot on thee, brother of England?" William hastily demanded.

"He knoweth that I need it not—that all my wishes are directed to that which he himself hath most at heart."

"Why, then, not influence thee to withdraw thy unjust domination in Scotland—to withdraw it without terms or insulting conditions?"

"Because he knoweth," John calmly replied, "because he knoweth that my personal wishes are controlled in that respect by others. But a truce with this war of words—it tendeth to no good end."

"It tendeth but to one, John of England," William said solemnly; "that of convincing us that the substitution of the line of David for that of William on the throne of Scotland"—here the Earl of Huntingdon entered the apartment, and William repeated his words—"it serveth but to convince us that the substitution of the line of David for that of William is the aim and object of the present policy of the King of England, and of his ally and abettor the Earl of Huntingdon. This is the opinion even of her whose counsels to her husband are ever of peace—an opinion which a desire for domestic tranquillity alone influenced her to keep within her own bosom, and within the bosom of him from whom she hath no secrets. Speak, my own brother David, have I not divined the truth? I would rather, man, that thou spokest this out openly, though every word would cut me to the quick, than thus be enveloped in mysteries and mysteries at home—in the foul web of state machinations at kingly conferences."

All present were struck mute by the solemnity, earnestness, and yet suffering with which William the Lion uttered these words. The silence was broken by the King of England.

"William of Scotland," he said, "I will reply to that accusation for thy brother and for myself; and my reply shall be such that thou thyself shalt be the first to acknowledge that thou hast wronged us grievously. To end these strifes forever between the two countries and their monarchs—to secure an amity between them of which our children as well as ourselves will reap the blessed fruits, I offer the hand of my daughter, the Princess Jean, to thy son and heir, Alexander; and on the contract to this end between us being signed, I give order for the instant removal of my troops from the garisons of Scotland."

To describe the effect of these words on the three auditors, would be impossible. The Earl of Huntingdon looked the very picture of surprise and perplexity; the queen hid her face and wept; William the Lion stopped short in his hasty traversing of the room, and seemed to doubt the evidence of his ears. When convinced, by the attitude and look of King John, that he had heard him aright—

"John of England," he said, "thou either art the most consummate hypocrite who ever wore a crown, or I have done thee and my brother David the most foul injury by my suspicions.

No, no," he added, after a moment's pause, "it is but mockery. Come, Ermergard, I can bear this no longer. When thou knowest, John Lackland, what daggers thou hast spoken"—then walking up to him—"if thou knowest!" he said, with a look which made even John's blood run cold and his eye quail. "No, no," he added; "it is impossible. Come, Ermergard, it is thy husband who calleth thee." He was at the threshold of the door, when, pausing a few moments, as if to consider the import of some words addressed to him there by the queen, he turned back, and again walked up to where King John and the Earl of Huntingdon stood.

"If," he said, "the King of England and David of Huntingdon dare draw up the contract of which the king hath spoken, William of Scotland will sign it."

Thus saying, he followed the queen with the appearance of one who had walked abroad in his sleep.

What occurred between the King of England and the Earl David is not known; but in a short time the latter passed to the chamber of William with a contract, which the King of Scotland signed. Not a word passed between the brothers.

John, on re-entering his palace, said to the attendant—

"Give me a stoup of wine, Conrad. I have spoken until my thirst hath become intolerable; but I have played the orator to some purpose. See that all be ready for the departure of the court this evening."

"Whither, gracious Sovereign?"

"For Durham. And, Conrad, see well to the safety of that young Scotchman; he goeth with us."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BORDERERS.

As the knight of Moredun was returning the same day, from giving orders for some arrangements required for the sports of the following morning, he observed a country-looking girl, very plain but neat in her dress, keeping always on a line with his horse—stopping when he stopped, and advancing with him always at the same pace. Under a large and close coif, he could occasionally, as she looked often and earnestly at him, discern traces of an intelligent if not perfectly faultless face. Attracted by the earnestness of her look, he contrived, at a very narrow turn of the street, so to place his horse that she could not pass without speaking to him, if such were her desire.

"Pardon, noble Cavalier," she said, with what would have been a very sweet voice but for the provincial gutturals, which the knight thought, after all, were not so very offensive, when pronounced by a pretty mouth—"pardon, noble Cavalier, if I say a few words to thee ere I

pass. I must say them quickly lest I be observed."

Some thoughts crossed Robert de Moredun's mind at the moment she said this, which he would not have liked Isabella de Huntingdon to have analyzed; however, on assuring her of a ready listener, she undeceived him, by saying—

"A young man—a Scotchman—called Tom Macduff, whom I met accidentally on the Seal this morning, and who has been taken forcibly to the King of England's residence, asked me to tell the knight of Moredun to go with all speed to the Crown and Anchor, at Newcastle, and to Marsden Rocks; and, from the way he said it, I gathered that he wished you, noble sir, to keep very quiet about it."

"This is singular; said he nothing else?" Robert de Moredun inquired.

"Nothing more, sir," she answered. "He wanted to speak to the Lady Isabella, but there was such a disturbance she did not observe him. The King of England did, and ordered him to be sent and shut up incontinent in his dwelling. Good-day, sir; let me pass, please."

Seeing that the knight sought for his purse, she added—

"Nay, noble sir, do nothing of the sort; please don't. Let me pass as if I had been stopped accidentally. Do, sir; you would injure me otherwise."

"Thou art a good and honest girl," he said, as he turned his horse to allow her to pass; "and—"

But she passed without giving him time to finish what he wished to say to her, and was instantly out of sight.

Puzzled by the singularity of the injunction, and the manner in which it had been brought to him, he determined, nevertheless, to obey it; and, after giving orders to his squire, Adam Peebles—the young man who had crossed the ice to save the king, and whom he had taken into his service—to prepare two steeds for a journey of some length, he sent one of the domestics to ask an audience of the Lady Isabella. The King of England had only a few minutes earlier crossed the square to his own residence.

The Lady Isabella was seated at a table near the door; some ladies of her suite were engaged at work at the farther end of the apartment, out of hearing of what might be spoken in an under tone.

"I come, Lady Isabella," Moredun said, "ere I go to the king to ask leave of absence—I come to explain the cause of my sudden departure."

"I did not know," she replied, "that the Lady Isabella had any claim on the confidence of Sir Robert de Moredun."

Moredun regarded her fixedly for a moment, and was struck no less by the change on her appearance and manner than by the alteration he now appeared to find for the first time in her words.

"There are so many things, lady," he said,

"that have occurred, of a strange and perplexing nature lately, that I need not be surprised at a change also in the lady whom hitherto I had regarded as free from any taint of what are generally, although, I hope, unjustly, considered attributes, if not privileges of her sex."

"And I imagined," she replied, somewhat ruffled, "that the knight of Moredun knew better what became the order to which he belongs, than to make the vulgar accusations against the sex a subject of remark in a lady's chamber."

"I ask pardon of the Lady Isabella; I was taken by surprise by the manner of her reception—"

"A true knight should never be taken by surprise," Lady Isabella said abruptly.

"Thou sayest well, lady; and the strangeness of the adventure which calls me from hence will demand all my judgment and presence of mind. I would have been well content could I have undertaken it with less of a conviction that, if the result should be favorable, it may not appear so in the eyes of the lady in whose presence I stand."

"Thou talkest in parables, Sir Knight," she replied, "and I am not versed in riddles. In what respect is it that the departure of the knight of Moredun, or his undertaking, can please or displease the Lady Isabella of Huntingdon?"

"In this respect, lady—that the message which now demands my absence was brought to Hexham by one who made an ineffectual attempt to speak to your ladyship this morning on the Seal, who was taken into custody, and is still so kept, by the King of England."

"The King of England!" Isabella exclaimed, starting, and placing her hand on the arm of the knight; "Robert de Moredun, what meaneth this?"

The knight was so struck by the change in her look and manner, as well as the recurrence to her former tone in addressing him, that he could not forbear saying—

"Ah! if the Lady Isabella had spoken but thus, when he who has sworn to devote his life to her service entered here, even now—"

"Robert de Moredun," she said, in a low voice, "we are in toils—in the toils of one for whom the walls have eyes and ears. Tell me quickly what this meaneth, and neither express surprise nor look surprised again, whatever my conduct toward thee may be. In truth, I am weary of the court, if not of the world itself, and would gladly exchange places with the poorest cottager, and live a life of labor, to be free of this load of care, and of a sorrow for which time can bring no cure."

"Say not so, lady," the knight replied; "there may yet be days in store for thee such as those who love thee desire to see. Even in what I have now to tell, if there be not hope, there is at least much to interest and to withdraw the mind, were it only for a brief period, from dwelling too intently on what is consuming

alike mind and body. I am sent for by an unknown hand to go without delay to Newcastle; and to a part of the coast near it. In this there might have been nothing to have aroused suspicion or expectation, but the messenger was first to have addressed himself to the Lady Isabella, and that messenger was the domestic of Sir Henry de Hastings; in his attempts to address her, he was caught and imprisoned by the king; and in all this I perceive a plot—a something at work underground—a something which says to me, and even to thee, lady, the time for yielding to doubts, conjectures, and fears is past—the time for action is come; and even if it be, as it were, in the dark that I must still work, I shall act with redoubled vigilance and skill, if I know that I have with me the thoughts and the good wishes of her, whom to serve is the highest object of my life.”

While he spoke, the Lady Isabella sat with her back turned to the attendants, and as he proceeded, her very soul seemed to rest on his words. When he had finished—

“Brave knight,” she said, in the same under tone, “take with thee every wish and thought of Isabella of Huntingdon. I have but one demand to make of thee: whatsoever thou hearest, whatsoever thou seest, let not one thought derogatory to the faith and troth of her who now speaketh enter thy mind. Now depart. If thou canst do so even with the semblance of displeasure, it will be well. Say not to the king or queen that thou hast seen their niece. Ladies,” she said, turning to her attendants, “this brave knight is weary of our dull court; he goeth to seek a more stirring life elsewhere. It is not highly complimentary to us; but, nevertheless, wish him well. I give thee good success, Sir Robert de Moredun!”

The ladies courtesied very low; Sir Robert acknowledged their courtesy in due form, and withdrew, apparently with great stiffness and formality, but his heart relieved of a heavy burden, and the whole force of his mind prepared for the yet dimly seen, if not wholly obscure future.

He sought the apartment of the king, to whom he intimated that a vow he had made, if within a certain distance, of visiting a shrine near Newcastle, brought him to ask leave to absent himself for two days, or three at the most, from the royal cortège.

“I can not refuse thee, Moredun,” the king replied, “but at such a time, thy demand cometh heavy on me. In truth, I am as one who walketh in his sleep: there seemeth nothing real around me. I say to myself, When will I awake? what shall I awake unto? My spirit is broken, and my wonted energy is gone. The King of England cometh to tell me that my niece Isabella is no longer for him, toward whom I felt as for a son, but hath transferred her affections to him whom I regard as the enemy alike of myself and of my house. Why I should thus regard him, I know not; but there was something which forever whispered

to me as I regarded him, That man will yet work thee harm.”

Observing the confused looks of Moredun, he continued—

“I ought not to have spoken to thee of this at such a time, but I can not hold my peace, else my heart would break. I had not recovered from the blow he gave me, when he asked the hand of my son in marriage for his daughter. Ay, thou well mayest start, Moredun—that son who is to me as dead—that son whom I have lost, and with him lost all that made life dear to me. Woe is me! if those who envy crowns knew at what a price they are worn, they would pity rather than envy their possessors.”

“But, my liege, is there not still hope?” Moredun said—“may there not be machinations?”

“There thou touchest it, Robert de Moredun—there thou touchest it; and it is the hope of that which sustains me. I tried them, however, to the quick, when I consented to sign the contract; but they stood the ordeal. I am lost in a sea of doubt, difficulty, and conjecture. Stay not long absent, Robert de Moredun; thy king hath need of thee.”

This conversation took place near one of the windows which looked into the court. The king was holding out his hand to the knight, who was bending to salute it, when William said hastily—

“What business can take the chief of Glenorchy to the Earl of Huntingdon’s apartments at this hour? They were in earnest conversation, too, the greater part of the morning in the pavilion. Moredun, thy sovereign hath sadly changed—he hath become suspicious of every thing and of every one. Yet I have not at any time placed confidence in that chieftain. He is in strict alliance with Errol, who hath even contravened us in council. Hold, there are two horses brought saddled for a journey. Surely David goeth not without advising with us. Who is this that entereth also? He is English, by his accoutrements.”

“I saw him, my liege,” Moredun replied, “arrive yester even at the mansion of the King of England; but he then was habited in a different manner: he seemed then only to have the bearing and garniture of a domestic or esquire at the most, now his emblazonment and garniture are to an extreme which it is painful to see, if he be a true knight.”

“Of a verity,” King William said, a faint smile stealing over his anxious countenance, “our royal brother, John Lackland, doeth well to send him to take off the glare of his trappings on the hills of Glenorchy—only, that he will run some chance of being mistaken for a cock of the mountains, and have a shaft sent to flutter among the plumes of his gay bonnet. See, he cometh out again, and the Highland chieftain with him. My mind is somewhat easier to observe that David of Huntingdon is not of the party. I dare answer for it, that

are upon no honest errand. I hope they are going to the hills, for these Highland caterans are less to be trusted in the Lowlands than the borderers themselves, and Saint Cuthbert knoweth that they are not over-scrupulous. We shall give them a lesson, however, on going north, which the rogues will not soon forget. Let me not further detain thee, Sir Robert—my affections go with thee.”

Moredun took leave of the king with a heavy heart. There is something in the sufferings of age, whether they touch the mind or body, which takes strong hold of the youthful mind, when not corrupted by the cold maxims of the world, or by the egotism of inexperience, and which partaketh largely of that valuable species of mournful contemplation which the wise man sayeth, “maketh the heart better.”

William had desired Moredun to intimate that he and his court would remain one day longer, not for display or shows, but to visit and to inquire into the state of his people. From Hexham he proposed to return by Alnwick; and, in crossing the Tweed, to make the repression of those who were still disturbing the borders, and of whom a party had bearded their monarch, even so far south as Hexham, one of the main objects of a journey northward, to be prosecuted leisurely, and with frequent stoppages.

After intimating the intentions of his sovereign, Moredun and his squire mounted, and rode off in the direction of Newcastle, at the moment when the adherents of John began to assemble in the square, that they might leave Hexham in the same order, although by a different route from that by which they entered it.

The sun was two hours past the meridian when Moredun and his attendant left Hexham; and the heat, even at that early season, was so great in the valley, that he judged it advisable, on crossing the bridge over the Tyne, at Corbridge, to remain there for a short time on account of their horses, until the sultry feeling in the air moderated a little. To while away the time, he strolled among the Roman relics of the place, and was involuntarily led to prolong his walk, until he approached the remains of the wall of Severus, which at that time was comparatively entire in many places, and was distinctly observable, stretching away over the undulating ground, to a considerable distance on either hand.

While engaged in examining, with the critical eye of a warrior, what seemed to be the relics of one of the towers which at intervals were placed along the line, he was startled by some one bounding over the wall; and, on his reaching the ground, to recognize in him one of the young men in green who had merited, although he had not remained to carry off, the silver arrow from the Seal that morning.

“It is somewhat audacious of you, my young friend,” Moredun said, on recovering from his

astonishment, “to remain so near the royal gathering, after the scene which passed on the Seal between thy companion and thee and the King of England.”

“Audacity is our profession,” the young man replied, laughing; “John Lackland should be a good judge of it, and a lenient, seeing how well he hath studied it himself. Thou wert in the northern suite, I observed, this morning, as thy dress also showeth. Pray, to what may I ascribe the honor of a visit of so brilliant a knight, as he of Moredun, to the boundary wall of our hunting-grounds?”

Moredun was no less surprised at the ease, not to say elegance, of language and deportment of the mountain archer, than at his knowledge of the court, and of himself. He replied in the same strain:

“Thy sylvan court must be a gay one, to judge by the guests it sends to royal meetings, Sir Forester. If I were to answer thee now to thy question respecting myself, as thou repliedst to the King of England, I should say that my errand here concerneth thee not; but thy frankness merits a more civil return—I am here out of listlessness, while my own and my squire’s horses are reposing at Corbridge, from the heat of the day, on our way to Newcastle.”

“Since such is thine errand, Sir Knight,” the archer replied, “wilt thou accept my company in the survey of this ruined wall for a little way? Thou seemest fond of these remnants of old times—as I am myself; and, besides, to tell the truth, I am right glad to have met thee: there was something in thy appearance which to me singled thee out from the rest of the gay company in the royal tent, I could not tell what. Dost thou believe in sympathies, Knight of Moredun? Our likings and dislikings are very curious. I have often thought on this as I lay by the side of the Yarrow. But we shall speak of that again, if fortune favor us with another meeting. See here—step this way. Let us mount to the top of that eminence, where the wall is so entire: it is not far, and the view from it is so magnificent.” Here—this way—follow me. There now, see the view we have attained of these valleys, and of the dark towers of Hexham, frowning as if they were the grim seigneurs of all these rich domains. Oh! if the crowned heads, which are hatching plots and counter-plots there, could but taste of the life free of politics and the conventional forms of courts, which we enjoy on the other side of those hills there, they would abdicate, each of them, ere a week were out.”

Moredun thought of the last words of William the Lion, and sighed his assent. The forester continued:

“Look there, where the valley of the North Tyne cuts in twain these rising grounds on which we stand—see with what skill these Roman commanders nearly filled up that pass there, with the strong buttresses and towers of wall. Certes, thy master, the Lion-King,

found his advantage in them, when John and he met there in a less friendly mood the other year. Let us descend here on the other side of the wall a little way; I wish to show thee a singular mound which, I think, the Britons must have raised on occasion of some attack made by the invaders at this point. Nay, do not hesitate, it will detain thee but a few minutes. It is hid among the copsewood which extends to such a distance here; but the work itself is nigh at hand. There now. The path is a little rough; but that is a path all true knights are familiar with."

Moredun was rather startled when he finished with sounding a whistle, loud and shrill; but the forester instantly added—

"It is for my companion, who I expect should be here about."

The words, however, were scarcely pronounced, when out of every bush there seemed to start a counterpart of his conductog; and Moredun thus found himself, ere he could stand on his guard, surrounded and disarmed by at least half a hundred of those freebooters—many of whom had neither the youth, frankness, nor gentle bearing of the forester who had decoyed him into this lure.

"I ask thy pardon, gentle Knight of Moredun," his betrayer said, "for the guile I have practiced on thee; but we have a law, we lawless men of the borders, that whosoever is found within a certain circle, especially if he be caught eying our outposts too closely, that he be intercepted, and carried for examination before our chief. I have no doubt that thou wilt give a good account of thyself, and be dismissed with all honors; but our orders are explicit, and I have been constrained either to detain Robert de Moredun a day from his necessary affairs, or to have had a shaft sent through this head of mine, which, although it may not be of much use to any one but the owner, there are some of our messmates desire to see elsewhere than on the shoulders it now graces. We were eyed by them from the first moment we met; and the only question was, whether I should be shot mounting the breach, or thou be taken captive within the walls. So, my merry men, let us be jogging. Sir Robert de Moredun," he added, with a less careless air, "let me entreat thee to go quietly with us. Resistance can only do thee harm, and perhaps prolong thy stay among the mountains. Believe me, that if I was forced thus to act, I have in no respect expressed toward thee sentiments which I do not feel."

"I must not comply with thy demand, Sir Entrapper," Moredun replied, "without endeavoring to make thee and thy lawless companions comprehend, that I am on matters of urgency, on matters of high import to the state, on matters of life and death, in the excursion I have made from Hexham; and that to detain me, *will involve very serious consequences to others besides myself, to say nothing of the severity of the reprisals which the King of Scotland will*

take ere long—a severity which will be doubled, when he knoweth of the trick practiced on his messenger."

"The business could not have been of all the urgency and importance your knightship demands for it," the companion of his decoyer at the sports answered, "which admitted of a leisurely survey of an old wall and moss-grown stones by the way. As for the reprisals of the King of Scots, they have never yet gone beyond the walls of Selkirk, which stands outside our march, and, ere he crosses it, there will be more shafts sticking in the crowns of his cavaliers than ever John Lackland sent there—and he has sent a few in his time. On, Sir Knight, on—the day advances apace, and, if we leave thee in the dark on the banks of the Reed Water, thou wilt wish often enough ere morning that the tops of the Cheviots were not between thee and the free lads of Ettrick Forest."

Moredun saw that opposition or expostulation were vain, and walked on with the band at a rapid pace, until they reached, at a considerable distance to the northward, a sort of island in a vast tract of marshy ground, where a number of horses, or rather ponies, were grazing. Besides one for each of the band, there were several supernumeraries, one of which was made ready for Moredun; and, thus humbly mounted, he trotted, with his strange companions, over wastes of heath and knolls covered with furze and broom; the way enlivened, or at least varied by songs, sallies of rude wit and laughter, until, gradually mounting thus, they attained the shoulder of one of the highest of that mountain range which now forms a part of the undisputed boundary between Scotland and England.

The party here paused to breathe their horses, which had hitherto cleared every obstacle, threaded every narrow path, and crossed every morass with a celerity and certainty which no larger breed of horses could ever attain.

Moredun was glad of the pause, which enabled him to survey the scene which there burst upon his view—a scene of wondrous beauty at any time, but doubly so, as viewed under the rich tints of the declining sun. Immediately in front of where he stood, the barren mountains sunk into the vast forest of Ettrick, which stretched out far as the eye could reach to the east and west, intersected here and there by the incipient rivers and the picturesque ravines, which widened into valleys as they approached the great plain of Scotland; out of which, again, rose the Minto hills, the Eildons and other heights, celebrated alike in history and in song. Edinburgh itself, and even the remote heights of the Lomons and Grampians were faintly visible; but the depth and brilliancy of the rays, which tinged so exquisitely the nearer objects, shed a flood of light so rich over the distance, that the more remote features of the scene were only seen as through a mirage: this very contraction of the view, how-

ever, which rendered it capable of being included in one *coup d'œil*, gave it an effect calculated to strike with rapture every contemplative and cultivated mind.

Whether it were a contemplation of this nature which arrested Moredun, or whether it was a feeling, which he strove in vain to analyze, that this was not the first time he had gazed upon it, it would be inquiring too curiously here to ask; but, from whatever cause it arose, his companions had to awake him out of his reverie as out of a dream; and the tints of the setting sun were lessening, and the shades of a lovely "gloaming" drawing on, as they pointed out to him the keep of Newark Castle among the trees of Ettrick Forest, into which they had now entered.

CHAPTER X.

DURHAM.

ADAM PEEBLES, who preferred modern to ancient beauties, and who did not hesitate a moment between looking at a pretty face and examining Roman relics, was so pleasantly engaged in conversation, in the inn at Corbridge, with a lively Northumbrian girl, that he not only did not offer to follow the steps of his master, but actually never observed his absence, until nearly two hours had elapsed since he had rubbed down the steeds and put them in their well-provisioned stalls.

"Mary, my bonny lassie," he said at last, "I think its mair than time that that maister o' mine were making his appearance. My gude-ness! if he and I hadna been a wee bit mair veef when King William had the ice at his head instead o' his feet, we wadna this day hae been hauding conferences and shooting at marks on the Seal o' Hexam."

"Who is your master?" Mary asked; "it is the first time I have heard you mention him."

"My maister? ow, wha should he be but the valiant knight o' Moredun," Adam replied; "he that saved the life o' the king, when I—"

"The knight of Moredun!" Mary exclaimed, "how does he happen to be here? Why is he not in Newcastle by this time?"

"How do you ken he should be in Newcastle, my lass?" Adam asked; "wha tell'd you he was gainin there?"

"It was I that told him to go," Mary answered.

"My gude-ness! but that's a queer story. What is there between him and you, my lass?" Adam asked, with a look which there was no misunderstanding. "I'm thinking there's somebody in Hexam wadna be mair than pleased to hear o' this kind o' wark. Wha would hae ta'en the knight o' Moredun for a chield o' that kind? But there's nae kenning folk in this world. I wadna, after what I've seen and what I hear kenow, trust even my ain father, the armorer o' Kinnoul, farer than I could throw him."

Mary laughed heartily, and soon relieved Adam's mind, by telling him what had happened, and advised him to lose no time in inquiring after his master. Adam went on the search, merely remarking, before he went out, that it was "ane o' the strangest stories he ever heard in his life, that about Tam Macduff; the servant o' that sour deevil, Sir Henry de Hastings. That there was some deevilrie gaun on was very clear, and he only hoped that in whisking awa the lads in this way, they would at ony rate leave the lassies."

He returned by-and-by in great dismay; his master was nowhere to be found. Mary, who thought she could make herself be better understood, went out in her turn, but she returned equally unsuccessful—not a trace of the knight could be discovered—no one had ever seen him. She was obliged to leave Adam in this perplexity, as her father's wagon drove up to the door, which was to convey her home. She bade her Scotch friend very affectionately good-by, but signed to him to keep out of the way of being seen by the father.

The only conclusion Adam could arrive at, after the natural agitation of his leave-taking of Mary had subsided, was that his master had changed his mind, and had walked back again to Hexam. Under this impression he mounted his horse, and, leading the knight's, took again the road to Hexam he had traversed with him nearly three hours before.

Not long after crossing again the bridge at Corbridge, he encountered the cortège of the King of England on its route to Durham.

"Is not that the knave of the knight of Moredun?" King John inquired. "We were told, ere leaving Hexam, that the master had taken his departure for some time, and here we meet his servant almost at the gate of Hexham leading his steed! Call him hither."

Adam was accordingly called.

"You are the servitor of the knight of Moredun?" John demanded.

"I am generally looked upon in that point o' view," Adam replied.

"How is it that you are here alone, and that your master's steed is without its rider? Has any thing befallen him?"

"That is preceesely, your Majesty, what I am on the look-out for."

"How now, knave! are these the replies for a varlet to give when the steed of the knight his master is found in his hands without its rider?"

"What is it your Majesty can expect of a knave and a varlet? Nevertheless, I would be unco well pleased to give answers mair satisfactory to mysel'," Adam said with a groan.

"Where was your master going when he left Hexham to-day?" John asked angrily.

"He went to Corbridge," Adam answered.

"I did not ask where he went to; but where he was going to, and where he has gone."

"He didna tell me the first, and I canna find out the second."

"This is very suspicious," the king said to those around him.

"Indeed it is," Adam responded, "and so I think every thing is nowadays. Folks disappear right and left—at hame and abroad—at the fireside and on the public highway; I expect to disappear myself ane o' these odd days."

"We shall take good care," the king said, "that does not happen, thou insolent knave. Order him to be taken in charge there by the men-at-arms, along with that other Scotch varlet; but take heed that they hold no communication together."

Adam was taken in charge by the men-at-arms, and was thus at no great distance from Macduff, with whom he exchanged at first astonished and then most piteous looks; but the guards utterly forbade and prevented the smallest intercourse or conversation. As they turned out of the valley of the Tyne, they sent expressive glances toward each other, and in the direction of Newcastle, but those looks contained none of the information which each desired. Thus they jogged on dispiritedly; forming part of a cortège which had more the appearance of a funeral than of coming from a peace-conference, so out of humor did the cavaliers feel that no lances had been broken—so provoked were the ladies that no hearts had shared the same fate—so chagrined were the men-at-arms at this sudden termination to all the little amours they had begun among the fair Northumbrians—and so insulted did the nobility and statesmen consider themselves by John having personally arranged in a single half-hour that which a year of plenipotentiariism had only rendered more perplexed, interminable, and almost hopeless.

The same gorgeous sun set to the south of the Cheviots which greeted the eyes of Moredun at the source of the Yarrow; and as the procession entered Durham, the wooded banks of the Wear, surmounted by the towers of the cathedral, were illuminated with a richness of coloring beyond the skill of painting, as if nature had exerted all her powers in honor of the unexpected visit of royalty.

The visit was not so well received by the great lights of Durham itself. The king had sent a messenger before him to the Bishop of Durham, to intimate that he and his suite would lodge that night in the palace, and in the buildings adjacent to the cathedral. The messenger, returning, met his Majesty on his approach to the town, with orders from the bishop to say that he was sorry he could not have the honor of entertaining either the king or his suite.

To describe the rage of the king when he received this message, and when he was forced, in consequence, to seek lodging for himself and followers in the hosteleries of the city, would be vain; it would be equally impossible to portray the dismay of the poor innkeepers, who knew that John was never very particular in calling for "the reckoning." On this occasion, however, to the rex the prelate, he issued orders that every thing should be liberally paid for, and that

every one should be as jovial and merry as possible—an order which made the lord-treasurer in his turn, whose purse had been pretty well touched at Hexham, look any thing rather than the picture of happiness.

There were many jovial parties in Durham that evening. Perhaps none of them more fully fulfilled the orders of the king, and certainly none of them exceeded in mirth and good-humor that which was held at the Cross Keys, where the commander of the guard did the honors of the table to a company of twenty-eight; two of the full complement of thirty standing sentry alternately, at the doors of the rooms where the two squires, or attendants, of the two wandering cavaliers were suffering the pains of solitary confinement—ameliorated to each so far as good eating can mitigate that most dismal of all situations, to those who are possessed either of much natural spirit or of none.

"This has been a queer visit to Hexham, Captain?" one of the guard observed, during a pause in the mirth.

"All visits are the same to a good soldier, Bill," the captain replied, with a *sang froid* that commanders only possess.

"They seem rather doleful those Scotch grantees," another ventured to observe, after the blow Bill received had been forgotten.

"So they well might," rejoined the captain, complacently; "Scotch terriers always look very small where there are English bull-dogs."

This was popular, and took amazingly. It emboldened Sam, the *parvenu* of the troops, to say—

"His Majesty was rather severe on those lads in green. They shot well, them foresters."

"They seldom hit the mark who shoot either before kings or at them, Sam," replied the sententious commander.

"What can the king mean by keeping so strictly those two Scotch curs we have up stairs?" demanded the lieutenant, who had already drunk deep, as was his custom of an afternoon.

"Cups and kings are two dangerous things to look into, Edgar," the commander answered, trying to look the lieutenant into sobriety; but the lieutenant was not to be quieted so easily.

"I know what obedience is, and what discipline is, as well as any one, Commander; and if the king says to me, Edgar, go hunt the hare, or, Edgar, go chase the wild-boar, it is all the same to me, I go with the same readiness: but if the king says, Edgar, go and hunt rats, thunder and lightning! it's a different affair altogether."

"It is better to hunt any kind of vermin than to be hunted, Edgar. William," the commander added in a low voice to one who sat near him—Edgar was at the other end of the table—"William, get the lieutenant to bed."

William found some difficulty with the lieutenant, who was eloquent on the subject of the rats, and did not wish to relinquish it; but at last he was successful, and they mounted the

staircase together. Politics being forbidden below stairs, the proceedings of the evening went on there afterward very amicably and very noisily.

The rooms where the two squires were confined were on the first floor, and opposite each other. The bedroom of the lieutenant was on the floor above. After sleeping nearly an hour he awoke, considerably refreshed, but with some vague recollection about the two prisoners, and a sort of impression that he ought to look after their comfort. He descended to the floor where they were confined, and found the two sentinels pretty much in the same state as he was himself before going to bed. They, seeing the lieutenant come to them *in propria persona*, had no doubt whatever that they were acting up to their duty in obeying his orders.

"Open these doors—I wish to speak to the prisoners," was the first of these orders, and it was obeyed so soon as the sentinels could find their respective keys and locks, which was no very easy matter.

"Come into this room, lads; why the devil, when lodging is so scarce, should two rooms be taken up with two Scotch hounds like you?"

Adam and Tom were by no means disposed to be critical in regard to the names bestowed on them, and obeyed the order with great alacrity.

"Nothing to drink allowed you? Nay, that is too bad—that is going beyond orders. I owe the commander a grudge—body o' me, but I shall be up with him. Go down stairs, Sawnies, get each of you a can, and bring them up here—nay, stay, lads, a moment—bring three."

The two Sawnies did not require a third order; they sprang down stairs, and finding the landlord engaged with the large party in the front room, and the landlady, who knew nothing of the prisoners, at the bar behind, they desired her to fill two cans, which they would come back for immediately, went out by the back door, and were soon at the north gate of the city demanding egress in the king's name, which was at once given them. The lieutenant fell asleep again, but this time on Adam's bed.

While these things were passing at the Cross Keys, the royal party at the Mitre was more calm; but there was the same disposition to forget the inhospitality of their reception at Durham in the depth of their potations after dinner.

"And this prelate's possessions extend over the greater part of the country, your Majesty," the Earl of Leicester remarked.

"Simon de Montfort," the king replied, "I shall make them more extensive still. Order the troops now stationed at York to come to the domains of the Bishop of Durham, to cut down the fences, to fill up every ditch, were it but a handbreadth in width, and let the beasts of the forest roam over his lands. He shall be paid for his inhospitality in the words of his

own priests—"Cut down all his hedges, and let the boar of the forest eat up his possessions." He was afraid of the number of his guests, body o' me! but he shall have guests enough, and those of his own diocese, too."

"But, your Majesty," the earl attempted to remonstrate, "could no way be devised but that of actually injuring his grounds?"

"Silence, Leicester," the king replied; "you nobles are ever more ready to consider the breadth and the value of the church lands than the weight of the insults their possessors offer me. See that what I have ordered be executed to the very letter; and if thy lads, after they make an end with Durham, choose to continue their work until they return to the very gates of York, it is not their king will take them to task for it. By all my hopes of pardon, if the humiliations I have undergone to appease that priest who sits at Rome, and who moves the crowned heads of Europe as if they were but puppets in his hand, are merely to bring me promises that are made only to be broken—and if my own subjects think, that because that wily politician hath uttered or written, or commanded to be said or sung, certain words, that they may turn against the hand that has fed them, and shut their doors against him who has but to say the word, and they would be cast out as the mire of the streets—body o' me, but I will teach them that there is still a king in England—that there is still a sceptre, and a hand to direct it! How now, varlet?"

"A friar craveth a private audience of your Majesty," the domestic replied.

"See, now, this prelate doubtless repenteth of his sins, when it is too late to repair them," the king said, addressing his guests. "He hath seen us safely lodged elsewhere, and now sends to say, as I can shrewdly guess, that imperative duty to the head of the Church hath compelled him to act as he hath done. I shall let him understand, that whoever be head of the Church, I am the superior of his lands. Lead me to this friar, knave. Leicester, see that the hospitality of my table suffer not by my brief absence."

The king was conducted into a chamber, where, the moment he saw the friar, he commanded his attendants to withdraw.

"Sir Reginald," he said quickly, "what news bringest thou me?"

"Indeed, your Majesty," the seeming monk replied, "I have not been so successful as my devotion to your Majesty's service would desire; nevertheless, my search hath not been altogether fruitless. The Lady Jean hath certainly directed her flight toward Scotland."

"Where and how hast thou learned this?" the king demanded.

"I traced her first to Doncaster, thence to York. There the Father Welford heard of her from a nun. He went to the cloister where she had found a refuge for some days, but she had departed. From York she came to Durham here, where she abode some weeks. You

Majesty may learn this from the lady-superior of Saint Catherine's, hard by here. From Durham, I had no difficulty in tracking her to Monk-Wearmouth, where a person exactly answering her description went on board a vessel, the destination of which was some port in Scotland—I rather think Berwick, but on this point I could not procure the assurance I required."

"But the child, Reginald, what is this which Mauners sayeth regarding Jedburgh and that accursed infant?" John anxiously demanded.

"I believe not one word of it; too long a period hath elapsed, your Majesty—too long a period. It is not possible that twelve long years can have passed over, and that child be in life, without your Majesty having heard of him before now from some quarter. I place no faith on that idle tale reported to Mauners. It would have reached us long ere this had there been any truth in it."

"So I should have judged, Reginald—so I should have judged had it not been for what befell in the case of Arthur. To have deemed that boy for more than five years silenced forever in the Seine, and to hear of him starting to life again and placed at the head of an army, by that ceaseless and remorseless enemy of my crown, Philip-Augustus! He can not do so again," John added, with a smile, which had something fearful in it; "he can not do so again—but the lesson taught me there makes me suspicious and ill at ease in regard to his cousin."

After a pause of some minutes the king resumed—

"I am glad thou art arrived hither, Reginald, for I much require thine aid; and thee alone, of all my agents, have I found worthy of my confidence. Sir Henry de Hastings, whom I placed at the Scottish court on the secret mission which thou wottest of, was on his way south, with the escort of King William, to meet me at Hexham, on occasion of this conference; which, if it hath any good result, is due to my own personal exertions, and not to these foolish public discussions, which are mere arenas for William the Lion's blustering exhibitions. Hastings left the escort of King William at Berwick, and hath not since been heard of; only that a squire or servant of his, a cunning Scotchman, was fighting his way through the crowd at our exhibitions, to say something to the Lady Isabella, who is engaged, against her will, to Hastings. I intercepted him, shut him up and interrogated him. All I could get out of him was that Sir Henry de Hastings was ill or wounded, or in some difficulty, at a place near Durham, of which he doth not remember the name, but to which he hath promised to lead the way."

"To-day, also," the king went on to say, "we met by the way hither, the squire of a Robert de Moredun, one of the cavaliers of William's court, an unknown upstart; but who hath something in his looks which I like not; who is also a suitor of the Lady Isabella, and, I fear, a favored one. This squire was leading his master's

horse, and, strange enough, this Sir Robert was on leave of absence also from the court of his sovereign—a leave only obtained this morning. The rogue could say nothing of what had befallen his master, nor whither he had gone, nor whither he had been bound—or rather, I should say, he would tell nothing, for I believe he knoweth perfectly; but, like all those impetrate Scotch varlets, Saint Andrew, who protects them, must have been an obstinate devil himself—there is no getting them to say one word beyond what they themselves choose. Those two serving-men—it sickens me to call them squires—those beggarly attendants, they are so disgustingly vulgar, and so unintelligible in their coarse dialect—those two varlets, are now in custody of the guard at the Cross Keys; and I wish thee, Sir Reginald, to go down and question them there, or bring them up here, if thou deemest it advisable."

The knight departed forthwith on his mission, and the king returned to the banquet-room, where he declared that he had been mistaken in thinking he had been called out by a messenger from the hospitable bishop; it was a poor monk from Hexham, who had followed them all the way to prefer a petition he had been charged with, which the sudden departure of the court had prevented him delivering.

"I am set on repressing the insolence of these proud prelates," he added; "but, in proportion as I do this, so much the more am I inclined to lend a willing ear to the complaints of the poorer and humbler among the class to which they belong"—that wide and general expression of benevolence in which John was an adept, and which leaves the world to put the widest, and the speaker himself to adopt the narrowest, interpretation in the practical application of the principle.

In going from the Mitre to the Cross Keys, the monk had to pass under the walls of the cathedral. He was arrested by the music, which, pealing from the majestic edifice, reverberated from the buildings around, and again faintly echoed along the steep banks of the Wear, had an effect during the stillness of the night well calculated to engage the attention and rouse the feelings of the passenger. It was drawing to a conclusion, however; the last "amen" died away on the ear, the lights were extinguished within, and the few worshippers stepped out and disappeared in the hazy moonlight. Reginald was crossing in front of the small private door which led immediately to the altar, where a female, attended by a page, came out, passed him with the usual reverence paid to his order, and were soon lost to view. As the lady passed close to him, she threw her veil a little back in doing reverence—the monk had not a full nor a distinct view of her countenance; but what he did see made him start and fall back for support against one of the buttresses. He endeavored, after a time, to shake off the feeling which overpowered him, and to follow them, to convince himself of the illusion under which he was

suffering; but by the time he could do this, they were too distant to render the pursuit of any avail. He therefore, divesting himself as much as possible of the impression produced by the face he had partially seen, directed his steps toward the Cross Keys.

On approaching that scene of festivity, he found it in a state of great confusion as well as uproar. The bacchanalians were lying in all directions—some over the backs of the chairs—some on the large table, some below it. In the midst of all, the voice of the commandant was heard hiccupping forth—

"It may be, Lieutenant—it is not genteel, I grant. I am reasonable, I grant. I say, I, the captain of the troop, grant that to hunt is fair game—if game be given to hunt; and that rats, court rats perhaps excepted, are not exactly game, not quite; but I say, I the commandant say, it is military order—if rats be caught, blood and thunder, keep the trap shut—shut, I say, shut."

"But, Captain," the somewhat sobered and alarmed lieutenant replied, "I was not in charge of the trap."

"True, right again, Lieutenant. I am reasonable, you see—the trap was there, as it were—thou wert here, that's it. Ah! reverend father, thou art there, well, here was the trap, was it not—thou wert there, your reverence—no not thou, he, the lieutenant, no; then, I say, why meddle with the trap?—what did the trap do to thee—come now, why didst thou, in the devil's name, open it?"

"What is it, soldiers, you talk about?" the monk inquired; "what trap, and what opening of it?"

"Why, your reverence," the captain began, "these two prisoners—whom the lieutenant calls rats—were trapped—as well trapped as ever were two vermin."

"Landlord," Reginald said, turning to the host, "tell me what this meaneth? Have the prisoners escaped?"

"They have, your reverence."

"And these sots stand disputing here, to give them time to make good that escape!"

"Here, your reverence," the landlord said, "is Joe, the stable-boy, come back to say that they have gone out by the northern gate. He was the only one in the house sober enough to go on the errand."

"It is well, landlord," the monk rejoined; "thy diligence shall be reported to his Majesty—along with the conduct of his faithful guard. There, boy, take that for thy diligence also. Return quickly to the north gate; and, in the king's name, order them to send out scouts instantly, on all the northern roads, and to bring back these two recreants, dead or alive. See the king's signet for thine authority, and bring it back to me to the Mitre. Ask there for the friar Reginald."

At these words the boy bounded off, and the monk turned with him into the street, leaving the guard in a mingled state of astonishment, drunkenness, and fear.

As Reginald traversed the streets which led him to the Mitre, he reflected deeply on the strange character of the sovereign in whose service he was engaged. Employing many agents, yet never trusting any one fully—keeping the retainers around his person in such a general state of restraint, that when relieved an instant from it, they were liable to run into excesses of the most disgusting nature, and often, as in this case, as mischievous as they were degrading.

In cogitations such as these, he arrived at the Mitre, where he found a subject for reflection to add to the two which had thus forced themselves on his mind, prepared as it was for sombre thoughts by the vision, or fancy, or the reality he had encountered at the private entrance to the cathedral.

The same riot, if not the same confusion, reigned there as at the humble hostelry. John, on returning from his conference with the monk, had found that Leicester had "bettered the instruction" he had given him in regard to hospitality; and, in the state of mind he then was, the king readily fell in with the general vein of conversation, the same extent of debauch. By degrees he reached a state of maudlin garrulity—talked much of the beauty of the Lady Isabella—boasted loudly of arrangements with William of Scotland, which the latter never could fulfill, and which would leave him, John, to pursue, without any molestation from Scotland, his repression of revolt in Ireland and Wales, and his recovery of the fiefs in France; spoke darkly of imprudences on the part of Sir Henry de Hastings, and of his determination to examine into them; and expatiated largely on the important disclosures he would, on the morrow, extort out of the two Scottish "varlets." All of which his auditory were themselves also in too maudlin a state, fortunately, to comprehend.

Rising from table in this excited condition, he met Reginald at the door, who at once brought him to his senses, by telling him that the two prisoners had escaped!

CHAPTER XI.

ETTRICK SHOWS.

THE scene which awaited Robert de Moredun, as he approached Newark Castle, was as unexpected as it was interesting. The castle itself was one of these border peels, or fortresses, of which there are many remains unto this day—the principal part of which, in many cases the entire building, was a square tower or keep of considerable strength and height—in the case of Newark, with several smaller buildings attached. It stood on a steep bank, overlooking the Yarrow, there little else than a mountain stream, almost on the verge of Ettrick Forest, of which it was considered the château or manor-house. The abruptness and wildness of the grounds, hollowed out by the force of sudden torrents from the mountains,

gave a very picturesque character, as well as strength, to the position; while the hills themselves, being visible from the occasional openings in the woods around, took from it that sombre appearance which would have characterized a more central site in the forest. Seen under the rich coloring reflected from the lingering rays of a glorious sunset tinging the streaky clouds of a calm and settled sky, it resembled a château in one of the openings of the Apennines, rather than the hold of a Scottish borderer; and when every glade and every opening in the wood was enlivened by foresters in the same picturesque and becoming dress as that worn by the companions and conductors of the knight of Moredun, it may well be imagined that he gazed on the scene before him with strong doubts at first if it were a reality, and not rather a part of some hallucination or dream, under which he had been laboring since he, in imagination only, had left the inn at Corbridge.

He was awoke, however, to a full sense of the reality of the scene by the shrill notes of a horn, almost at his ear, recalling the "merry men" of Ettrick from their occupations and sports to the evening repast; and advancing with his companions, he was ushered into the presence of a man more plainly dressed than any around him, but distinguished from them all by his commanding, noble, and almost majestic figure and appearance. He was standing near the door of the castle, laughing heartily at, as it seemed, a story told him by a body of troopers, who were depositing near him some spoils of the chase; but, on the decoyer of Moredun going up to him and saying a few words, he advanced, and with a courteous salutation, addressed his unwilling visitor thus:

"It may at first surprise thee, Knight of Moredun, not only to be told that I most heartily welcome thee to this our poor castle, but that I have long desired to see thee in it. But we know better in our retirement here what passeth in the great world without, than the great world knoweth of us. We have heard of thy conduct and bearing in the field, as well as in the Scottish court; and, above all, we are not ignorant of what Scotland oweth to thee, as the preserver of her monarch in the hour of danger. Again I bid thee welcome; and if thou disdain not the hand of a rude border chieftain, I can at least give assurance that it was never yet raised to aid oppression, and never refused in the cause of the oppressed."

Moredun held out his hand, and while he returned the warm pressure of the chief, he replied:

"Strange and, I must confess, annoying as are the circumstances under which, noble chieftain, I have been compelled to visit this retirement—a retreat such as I did not suppose to have existed in Scotland—if any thing could reconcile me to the obstruction this adventure offers to the fulfillment of weighty and grand

devoirs, it would be to have met with one whose courtesy is so great, and whose bearing would do honor to any rank in that great world with which he seems to have made an acquaintance so intimate."

"Thou hast timed thy arrival well, Godfrey," the chief said, addressing Moredun's earliest acquaintance among the troop; and then, turning to the knight himself—"the beauty of the evening tempts us, Sir Knight, to take our evening repast without; we only wait the presence of another guest."

As he spoke, a lady, tall, and of a dignified look and demeanor, dressed in mourning, came out of the castle, but, on seeing Moredun, she started, drew back, and had the appearance of being about to faint, when, as the chief approached her with solicitude, she recovered herself, and said:

"Only a momentary indisposition, kind sir; the freshness of the air has quite revived me;" and she took her seat at a long table, by the side of the chieftain. Moredun, as directed, took his place at the chief's right hand; and although in this situation he could not often obtain a glimpse of the lady, in whom he felt an indescribable interest, he never looked in that direction without observing that her gaze was fixed upon him, but always suddenly withdrawn when she saw that it was observed. The rest of the seats at the table were occupied by those who seemed by their dress to be leaders, or to hold positions of some eminence in the band; the great body of whom, which could not be less than five hundred men, stood around and helped themselves without ceremony to what was within their reach, excepting at the part of the table immediately before or near the chief.

On the table itself, besides game in endless variety and in all styles of cooking, there was every delicacy which at that day could be found at royal tables, and wines such as few monarchs of that period knew of or could procure. Moredun was lost in astonishment, and, although his appetite was well sharpened by his long walk and ride, it was some time ere he could do justice to the good things set before him; and long afterward, when he recounted that scene, his words would have been held but as idle tales, if subsequent events had not verified and established, as a matter of history as well as of song and of tradition, that the hereditary chieftains of Ettrick Forest lived in a style surpassing that of the courts either north or south of them; and had constantly in arms a body of archers, in a uniform described as similar to that of the foresters of Sherwood, of whom they could at any time bring five hundred into the field.

It may be supposed with what astonishment a cavalier brought up at the court of Scotland looked around him on such a scene, of which he never before had heard as existing in the country of which he was one of the defenders, and in which he held so high a position; and

he would have been entirely at a loss to have accounted for the existence of such an *imperium in imperio*, if the manner in which he had entered the territory of the chieftain at whose table he sat had not shown him, as a strategist, that it could not be attacked by any considerable force from the side of England; and his subsequent acquaintance with the locality convinced him that the broken and well-wooded district they inhabited was almost impregnable from the side of Scotland, against any mode of warfare then known.

The lady withdrew early, taking leave for the night of Moredun with very marked courtesy; after her departure, the cup, song, and tale went briskly round, while there remained a trace of twilight, and at a late hour for the foresters, but what would have been an early one that evening at Durham, part of the gay company went off whistling through the woods to their respective habitations, others found roosting-places in the out-buildings; and the chieftain and the *élite* of the band conducted Moredun into the castle. From the large baronial-hall in which the usual festivities were held, he was led up stairs to a small bed-room, plainly but neatly furnished, where, in spite of the wonderment in which he was placed, he soon fell asleep, and did not awake until the sun was shining through the trees, and the birds welcoming with their glad notes the arrival of another fine morning.

On descending, he found his host already surrounded by the leaders of his clan, to whom he was issuing the orders of the day; the breakfast was already prepared, and, after the salutations of the morning, that repast, which was worthy of its precursor of the evening, was done ample justice to. The lady was not present.

When the different parties had gone off on their several missions, the chief took Moredun aside into a grotto overlooking the stream, and, after they were seated, addressed him thus:

"I will not pretend, Sir Robert de Moredun, to be ignorant of or insensible to the annoyance thou must have felt yesterday, and must still labor under to-day, at being so suddenly snatched from the proper sphere of thine occupations and devoirs; but, I hope, ere we part company, thou mayst think thyself recompensed for the delay, and rewarded for the patient and courteous manner in which thou hast conducted thyself under this trespass on thy patience and time. To convince thee in some measure that I have not done so—for Godfrey acted by my express injunctions—without being actuated by better motives than mere caprice, I must tell thee that, for reasons which can not be made known at present, but which thou mayest be informed of afterward, I take a deep interest in thy welfare, and am not ignorant of what has happened of late at the Scottish court, not even of that which they are at present the most anxious to hide."

Moredun could not conceal his agitation and

surprise at these words; but the chief, without seeming to observe it, continued—

"It is my conviction that I can be of use to thee; and if thou feelest, from what thou hast seen of me and from what I have now told thee, that thou canst have confidence in the chieftain of those who must seem to thee nothing short of a band of freebooters, and wilt inform me of the circumstances which induced thee to set out on the journey to Newcastle, which I have interrupted, it is possible that I may be able to give thee information from which thou mayest derive important aid in the task thou hast undertaken."

Encouraged by the manner not less than by the words of the chieftain, Moredun in return told him what had occurred, and the warning he had received to go without delay to the Crown and Anchor at Newcastle, and to Marsden Rocks on the coast of Durham.

On hearing the names of those places, the chief started to his feet, exclaiming—

"I thought and feared as much. It is well I brought thee here, Sir Robert. Either Godfrey or I will accompany thee to-morrow, if thou art willing to rest so long, and wilt accept our convoy."

Moredun expressed his thanks for the offer, and his readiness to accept it.

"I will put thee now," the chief said, "in the hands of Godfrey; I have much to attend to ere either he or I can depart. He is a good young man, and intelligent; thou mayest speak to him with all frankness. Here, Godfrey," he added, as they came out of the grotto, "I consign Sir Robert de Moredun to thy charge until the hour of dinner; I depart with him on the morrow, and have much to prepare before my departure."

"I am very proud of the charge our noble chief has put into my hands," Godfrey said, after he had left them, "although I shall make but a poor substitute; but as it is more of places than of persons I have to speak, and as they speak better for themselves than any guide, so my task will be comparatively easy.

"It is curious, that in regard"—he continued—"to that with which I ought to begin, I can give almost no information—that is, about the origin of the chieftain, and how it is that such a clan should have been gathered around him. There would be some strange stories to tell, I daresay, if every one of the five hundred you saw congregated here yester even were to recount his history. I have heard it said, that the first of the free-livers here came from Moravia, among the mountains of which they lived pretty much as we live here—although, probably, with bacon instead of venison, and hock instead of Champagne. They found, it is said, the old castle down there among the trees, which we now call the Oldwark, ere long too small for them, and built this Newark for the chief and the leaders. Several of the clan live still in the Oldwark with their families, the others find accommodation at various 'steads."

ings' in the forest, where they have little gardens and plots for barley in the clearings that have been made around the steadings. They live carelessly and happily, knowing little of the distresses which war brings to the rest of Scotland, unless when, after a border foray, or when a party is sent out to assist some weak neighbor who is attacked by a more powerful, a father or a son may be brought home on a wicker bed, or is found, after some days' absence, buried, without any funeral service, in a morass.

"The walks may be somewhat long," Godfrey added, "but I should like you to go with me to some points from which more of the surrounding country can be seen."

From those he pointed out the meeting of the Yarrow and the Teviot, and again the junction of those two rivers with the Tweed—dwelling much on the strength of the position which the rivers, woods, and broken ground furnished them with, but mingling his descriptions and his discourse with an appreciation of the beauties of nature, which sometimes rose almost into a vein of poetry. Thus early did "Etrick Shaws" and "Yarrow Braes" suggest poetic thoughts, and give promise of being the birth-place of Scottish song.

On reposing from the heat of the day, during one of those long strolls, in a dell through which a little mountain stream trickled rather than ran between the mossy rocks, Moredun said to his companion—

"You asked, yesterday, if I believed in sympathies, or, rather, if I can account for that indescribable instinct which makes us take up likings and dislikings at first sight. I believe that such instincts are derived from a general outline, if I may so speak, of character at first sight, which touches the heart rather than the head, and is sent there by some general first nervous impression, which is afterward lost in the minute traits of the countenance, manners, and character addressed to the understanding in closer intercourse with the individual. I have a question to put to you in return. Do you believe in, or, rather, have you experienced, or can you account for that singular feeling which sometimes comes over us of having been in the same place, having seen the same people, having heard precisely the same things said? For instance, when I reached the top of the hill with you yesterday, I felt as if I had stood before on the same spot surveying the same view. When I descended, I was lost in wonder and delight with the scene which presented itself—but it seemed as if it were not altogether new to me. I had some feeling as if I had spoken to your chief before and heard his voice, and that, above all, I spoke and still speak to you as to one whom I had known from my childhood. It is not possible that this could have been the case, else I would have remembered before I came to Etrick Forest that I had been *there formerly*; yet still the impression of having *been among the same scenes before* was strong upon my mind."

"I have felt somewhat of what you describe," Godfrey replied, "yet not so strong as what you now say—and then it was a feeling of the most transient kind. It is a very singular sensation, and gives great countenance to some of the exploded systems of Eastern philosophy and theology. But the Fathers at Selkirk and at Kelso, with whom I hold occasional converse, tell me that such studies are very dangerous; so although I can not help thinking of them sometimes, I never speak of them; indeed, I have no one here who would understand me."

"Leaving, then, these mysteries," Moredun said, "will you pardon me if I put two questions of a practical personal nature, in which I feel a deep interest? Who are you who now speak to me, and have brought me to this new world, and who is the lady in mourning who sat beside the chief yesterday?"

The color rose in the young man's face as he replied—

"The lady whom you saw came here only a short time since, and we know not who she is. The chief says she is a near relative of his; he treats her with great respect, in which he is imitated, each in his own way, by all of us. As for me, I am a scapegrace, brought here by the chief, so young that I have but a very hazy and indistinct recollection of where I had been before I was taken under his charge. I was at first, they tell me, a very naughty boy, and I can very well believe it. I have not perhaps yet lost the character—at least you must have thought so yesterday; but if I have not, it is not through the want of the kindest and most patient instructor who ever took a refractory youth in hand. I need scarcely say that I speak of our chief. But come," he added, "as I am still foolish enough not to be able to mention him unmoved, we shall break off the subject by my leaving you awhile. I think you know your way, and I shall return, so as to be sure of meeting you, by the way we came, if you have not made your appearance an hour before dinner. You will pardon me for leaving you until then; it may facilitate some arrangements for the morrow."

Moredun continued for some time after his companion left him in what has been forcibly denominated since in Scotland "a brown study," his mind filled with the singularity and mystery of his situation, and with the sudden change of scene, as well as the fairy-like nature of all which now surrounded him. He thought of the knights of romance, and began to believe that much of what he had hitherto considered fable was actually true and had really happened; and his reverie, aided by the sound of soft music wafted through the "glen," would perhaps have risen into one of those ecstasies in which prose becomes poetry and poetry inspiration, had not the musician himself approached, who ceased his song on beholding Moredun, surveyed him narrowly for a moment, and then sprang forward to his feet, took his hands and kissed them ardently—then, looking up in his face, said, in

naturally his voice tremulous with emotion—

"I knew thou wouldst come again!" and, lifting his face between Moredun's knees, wept if his heart would break.

Starting up, he ran out to the path as if to find that no one approached, came softly back, laid his hand on Moredun's shoulder, gazed long and earnestly at him, and again sunk down sobbing between his knees.

This extraordinary and unlooked-for visitor was in a foreign dress, something similar to those worn by the troubadours. His appearance was youthful; and yet there were wrinkles and traces of care and sorrow on his beautiful countenance, which at times made it difficult to know if he really were a young man, or an experienced actor who could on occasions successfully hide the ravages which time had made. Ere Moredun could recover himself sufficiently to address him, the minstrel looked up at him, and repeated—

"I knew thou wouldst come again! They have my wits are gone, and that I have seen thee bleed and die! But do I not see thee?—I not hold thee in my embrace? Yet strange visions come over me, and at times—yes, at times—but do not say so to them"—here he almost whispered in the ear of Moredun—"I too have thought thee dead. Oh! speak to me, let me hear again that voice. Yet no, no—with that voice the vision might again depart. But thou art not dead. Shall I sing to thee that when thou lovedst so well? no, it was not thee, 'twas her;" and the poor minstrel sang something in this strain—

"And she deem'd him dead,
And the mass was said,
And the dirge was sung on high;
The response was given
From the vaulted heaven,
That the valiant never die.

"Is it not so? I said thou wouldst come in, yet she believed me not, for—

"Many an hour,
In her hall and bower,
That lady did weep and mourn;
They wished her wed—
She smiled sad, and said—
'Ah! the valiant never return!'

"Nay, speak not—listen! I have waited, I see, see what follows—mark—

"And he came to the bower
At the evening hour,
When the lady ne'er deem'd him nigh;
My heart, she cried,
To the heavens replied—
'No, the valiant never die!'

"Hush! don't speak—lie quiet; I shall tell you thou art gone. Hush!—hush!—

They sought in the dungeon's farthest cell,
In its chambers the most remote;
The straw where the toad and the viper dwell—
In the moat and the well they sought.
The iron clank'd, and a hollow sound
To their footsteps' tread replied;
For the captive was gone, and the chains were unbound
Where many before him had died!

"Take the path to the right. I shall glide here under cover of the walls."

And the songster slipped away, at first gently, and then ran down the path, where his notes were again heard waking the echoes in the "Rhymer's Glen;" accompanying stanzas, which, ages afterward, were turned into a rude strain of vulgar prophecy, the interpretation of which formed an important branch of the "wisdom of our ancestors."

Moredun met Godfrey on the way near Newark Castle, to whom he recounted this strange adventure.

"Ay, you have been found by Edwin, poor man, who is always tracing likenesses, and thus endeavoring to identify the present with a past which seems to have been with him of a very checkered and romantic kind. He came here with the lady in black, and is allowed to roam at will through the forest, where his music and songs are held in high request, especially by the nymphs, of whom, by-the-way, you will see a good sprinkling at dinner to-day. We are to have it earlier than usual on their account, as they are dying with impatience to dine at the same table with an actual living cavalier, direct from the court of William the Lion of Scotland."

It was as Godfrey had said. The scene in the neighborhood of the Castle was diversified, and greatly improved, as Moredun thought, by a judicious intermixture of the softer sex, whose blue eyes, and, in general, flaxen locks were well set off by costumes in which deep and rich colors were predominant. These dresses were made up in a style not unlike those worn by the Savoyards, who are found wandering and timbreling unto this day, in all the principal cities of Europe—constantly reminding the votaries of fashion, that there may exist a becoming style of dress which is not to be found in drawing-rooms, and an elegance of toilet any thing rather than *à la mode*. There was a dance on the Lee in the evening, the figures of which were borrowed from the fairies, and the steps taught according to the unconfined rules of nature; but, to the great mortification of the nymphs of Ettrick Forest, Moredun pleaded the fatigues of the preceding day and the journey awaiting him, for declining to join in it. It was somewhat of a stain on the escutcheon of our hero, that, the day before, a lady had told him that a true knight ought never to be surprised, and that he should have been both surprised and taken prisoner not two hours afterward; but that was nothing compared to what he now suffered in public estimation, when he, a *preux chevalier*, pleaded fatigue to bright eyes and willing feet. Some uneasy kind of feeling with regard to his want of gallantry came creeping over him, and he was yielding to it, and in the act of advancing toward an exceedingly pretty young cottager, who had not yet joined in the dance; but a great commotion in one of the leading avenues put a sudden stop to the mirthful proceedings, and drew the attention of all to what was passing in that direction.

Although the merry men of Ettrick Forest were not unaccustomed to scenes of strife and violence, it was not often that any of those were acted close to their own homesteads. It was, therefore, with a feeling of general surprise, that the principal band on the Lee saw a party of their men, who formed one of their outposts, conducting or rather driving toward the Castle two knights, bound, preceded by four of the foresters, carrying the body of one of their companions. The captives were advancing with great reluctance, and occasionally required rough handling to induce them to quicken their pace.

The forest chief, Godfrey, and other leaders, accompanied by Moredun, hastened forward to meet the party.

"Why, how is this," the first said, "my trusty Richard Allen a corse, and Sir Dougal Campbell of Glenorchy brought a prisoner to my gate! what meaneth this, my men?"

"Honored chief," one of the foresters replied, "we discovered these two men with their visors closed, skulking up a ravine within our beat. We ordered them instantly to unmask and declare their business: they refused. Allen denounced one of them, by his voice, to be a base tool of King John, who had committed murder at Sherwood. Not him thou hast addressed—the other. Look at him, my chief; he is, besides, a deserter from our own band. A scuffle ensued, in which Allen lost his life by the hands of that villain, and some others of us have been wounded. We overcame them at last. Here are their helmets and swords."

"I neither expected to find thee in such company, Sir Dougal Campbell," the forest chief said, "nor engaged in such a suspicious enterprise—not to give it a harsher name."

"My companion is Sir John Mauners," Glenorchy replied haughtily, "one of the nobles of the King of England."

"And one of his basest minions and tools, as well as a deserter from our forest ranks," the chief replied; "as such, he must suffer the ignominious death imposed by our laws. I would have wished, Sir Dougal, to have found thee more honorably accompanied. I deeply regret the necessity which compels me to put thee in the same ward with such a felon. To-morrow I shall hear what thou hast to allege in thy defense. At present, behold the anguish thou hast brought on that family, and humble thy proud heart in the cell to which they are about to conduct thee and thy friend, by reflecting on the scene now before thee; and," he added in a lower voice, and close to his ear, "on the traitor's death which sooner or later awaits thee."

The scene to which the chief referred, might indeed have touched the most callous heart. Richard Allen's widow and three daughters—one of them the beautiful young woman whom Moredun was advancing to invite to the dance, at the moment her father's body was brought up the avenue—stood over the green bier that

had been hastily constructed by his companions; heart-stricken—the mother, speechless, her eye fixed and dry—the daughters rending the air with their lamentations. Around them were gathered the foresters—merry men no longer—with their families; all feeling as if bereft of a near relative, for Richard Allen had been the favorite of all.

It was probably the storm which the forest chief saw gathering in the dark looks of his men, which influenced him to order Glenorchy and Mauners to be instantly placed in duranca. They were conducted to the Castle, led up the one narrow staircase to the top of the building, and shut up in a tower which projected from one of the corners of the keep.

When the chief, Godfrey, and Moredun were alone, the former said—

"I have long known that treachery lurked in the breast of Glenorchy—the race was ever faithless; but, I confess, I looked not for that treachery being accompanied by meanness, and acts worthy only of the miscreant with whom he was found. The discovery of those two spies, or something worse, so near us, and the looks which Mauners cast toward thee, Sir Robert, render it necessary now to warn thee, that if I allow either of these men to escape from hence, it will increase the danger and the difficulty which surrounds thee and thy royal master. The lady now in this house is the sister of King John, whom he pretended to bury in Clairvaux; but whom, in fact, he shut up in Sherwood Castle; and it was, doubtless, under some information relative to her being here, that these men were approaching to our door as spies. If they carry back that information to the English king, coupled with a statement that thou art here, as it will appear, on a mission from King William, it will still further embolden John in the intrigues he is now carrying on at the Scottish court; in which Glenorchy, covertly, has been taking an active part. Thou must not, therefore, be surprised if the measures I take with them both to-morrow be both prompt and severe. Meantime, let us go to rest. We must be early astir; for this affair must be finished ere Godfrey and thou depart. I send him in my stead, for there may be others in the train of these men, and with danger so near us, the chief must be found at home."

Moredun lay awake for several hours. The thought of danger menacing his royal and beloved master, in addition to the misfortunes which had befallen his house, filled his mind, and drove away all inclination to sleep. He got up, lit the lamp, beside which his sword habitually lay, and sat down again on the side of the bed, lost in reflection, until at last slumber overtook him; and he lay back to be the victim, from his position, of a most oppressive night-mare, which took the form of the sailor who first warned him at Perth, sitting not on the crupper of his horse, but on his own breast. In his attempts to push him off, his hand encountered a real body, and looking up, he saw

Manners bringing down toward his breast, laid open as it were to the blow, a dirk which glistened in the light of the lamp, as it was struck from behind out of the hand of the assassin, and the soft voice of Edwin, the minstrel, was heard almost whispering—

“Nay, thou must not do it again!”

Ere Moredun could rise from his awkward position, Manners had run to the casement and let himself down outside, while Edwin descended the narrow staircase, singing by the way. Sir Robert at last regained his feet, seized his sword, and was advancing to the window, when he saw the doorway by which Edwin had gone out, filled by the portly form of Sir Dougal Campbell, who, casting a glance around, and seeing no appearance of Manners, advanced in a threatening attitude, with his drawn sword toward Moredun, who instantly put himself on the defensive. Long and fierce was the combat which ensued. It was very unequal, for the knight of Glenorchy still retained part of his armor, while Moredun was totally undefended. The claymore of the former was lighter, too, than the long sword of his destined victim. This inequality was so apparent, that the forest chief, and Godfrey, who, roused by the noise, now stood at the door, attempted to interfere; but Moredun called out—

“Stand back, friends—for the sake of knighthood; and of Scotland, leave him to me!”

Thrice Sir Robert had to fight on his knee, in order to parry the underthrusts of the Highland chieftain; and more than once, but for the embrasure of the window to which he was driven, he would have been overcome. But watching his opportunity, as Glenorchy was endeavoring to dazzle him, and distract his attention by the brilliancy and rapidity of his moves, Moredun threw himself forward, and sent his sword right through the corslet and the heart of his adversary. Sir Dougal Campbell fell without a groan, and never moved again.

It was afterward found, that the previous knowledge which Manners possessed of Newark Castle, had enabled him and the chief of Glenorchy to effect their escape out of the room in which they had been confined, by a casement which opened upon the upper parapet or battlement; to go round from thence to another casement by which they entered the room where their arms were stored along with others, and from it to descend the staircase to Moredun's room, which was shut merely by a latch. The same knowledge profited Manners in making good his flight after dropping from the window; and a search after him, continued for several days, was totally fruitless.

Richard Allen was buried at Selkirk. The mound which covers the grave of the Highland chieftain may yet be seen near “William's Cross.”

Sir Robert de Moredun, along with some slight scratches, had received a severe wound in the thigh, which required careful treatment, and kept him some days in his apartment. If

any thing could have lessened his chagrin at the delay, it would have been the interest he took in the tales recounted to him by his kind nurse, the Lady Jean—an interest heightened by the singularity of his situation—propped up in a couch, in a little chamber of a border peel, listening to tales of love, of war, and of “moving accidents by fire and flood,” from the mouth of her who had been Queen of Sicily, and who, by all the world, save her own brother and his minions, was supposed to lie buried at Clairvaux. Above all, when she came to the exploits and adventures of her lion-hearted brother—with Blondel (Edwin) sitting at her feet, who had been the companion of the dangers of his sovereign, and his deliverer in many of them—who had accomplished, also, her escape from Sherwood, and who had been still spared to be the unconscious instrument of saving the life of him who listened to the thrilling tale—the hours flew past on such rapid wings, that when he told Godfrey he was now fit to mount the saddle, and to accompany him into Northumberland, he could scarcely believe that some days had elapsed since he had sent the chief of Glenorchy to his last and dread account.

Among the narrations of the Lady Jean, she frequently alluded to a daughter whom, when very young, she had committed to the charge of an aged English cavalier, as he touched at Sicily, on his return to England from Palestine. The persecutions she had endured had prevented her using any means of inquiring into the fate of that daughter, and she besought Moredun, after the pressing affairs were accomplished, on which he was now about to set forth, that he would make use of the information she had given him, to hear of her welfare, if she were still alive.

Godfrey, by the advice of the chief, put on armor pertaining to the knights of the Order of the Star; and as the young cavaliers set forth on their expedition southward by Selkirk and Jedburgh for the county of Northumberland, there were many admiring eyes lingering at the cross path in Ettrick Forest, which spoke good wishes for them, in a way which fair ladies can at all times express for gallant knights, much more forcibly than by words.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GOLDEN CROSS.

THE two Scotch lads, when they made their escape by the north gate of the city of Durham, never looked behind them, and never exchanged a word together, until they had put a very respectable distance between them and that ancient episcopal stronghold. At last Macduff broke the silence by saying—

“Peebles, what will it be best for us to do?”

To which Adam replied—

“I think we had just best hand on.”

"But," Macduff rejoined, still holding on at the same pace; "thae English vermin will be sure to follow us, and we have nae chance without naigs. Do ye no think we had better separate, and ilk ane seek a hiding-hole?"

"I dinna like to sinder, Tam," Peebles replied; "four legs are nae better for escaping than twa, but twa heads are better for plotting than ane."

"Weel, what do you think we should do, Adam? ye were aye thought rather a lang-headed callant; and as for me, in a strait like this, I get aye the mair confused the langer I think."

"I'll tell you an idea I have, Tam," Peebles answered; "but if ye think I am right, we would need to set about it incontinent. It is this: Wherever we try to scoug on this side o' Durham, we'll be sure to be ta'en; for they'll think that we would rin as fast as we could to the ither side o' the Tyne. Now, I've been thinking, that if we turned to the left here, and made for the south side o' the town, we wad be safer there, ay, even within the very walls, than we can be wi' the sea before us, like the children o' Israel, and that hardened Pharaoh and a' his hosts at our hinder ends."

"Are ye daft, Adam Peebles?" Macduff asked, stopping in amazement.

"No, Tam," Peebles replied, stopping also; "the mair I think about it, the mair I am convinced that it is our only way of jinking thae blude-hounds. They'll find that we have gone out by the north gate; they'll never think that we would be sae daft, as ye say, Tam, as to turn back; naeboddy ken^{us} in the south side o' Durham, and if we are to be ta'en, I would rather be captured whar there's folk to look on, and see justice done, than be caught in the country, whar there's nae houses to echo the sound o' a sabre cut."

"Maybe ye're in the right, Adam; ye had aye mair gumption than me—we can but be ta'en at the warst."

They turned, then, without delay, keeping always at nearly the same distance from the town; and they had reason to congratulate themselves on the movement, for they soon afterward saw, in the direction of their first flight, torches, and other signs of a search, which there would have been little probability of their eluding. In a barn, which they found open, they slept, alternately, during the night; and at the first opening of the gates, they entered, without obstruction, and without exciting observation, the gate which was at the opposite side of the city from that by which they had escaped.

In looking about for a hostelry, the sign of "The Golden Cross" attracted their attention, over the door of a clean-looking but humble inn in a by-street, and there they entered. *It was still so early, that the only person astir was a gawky country girl, who was cleaning and sanding the floor.*

"Can ye gie's anything to eat, my lass," Tom said; "we have had a bit o' a walk this morning, and are snappish a wee."

"Thee'llt hae to weatte till young missus coome doon," the wench replied; "it's her as hast keas."

"Oh, we can bide a bit," Adam rejoined; "we're no sae very toom as that comes to. We'll gang into this little room here, in the mean time, to be out o' the way o' your reding-up."

The little room into which they went was one of three adjoining the *salle* or kitchen, divided from each other by a wooden partition, through which every word which passed in any of them could be heard in that which adjoined it. They were in the middle division, and could hear what passed on either side. The feeling of their situation, and the escape they had effected, made them naturally choose positions in which they could not be distinctly visible from the kitchen, but from which they could see all that passed in it. There they sat very quiet, if they did not sometimes actually nod, after the fatigue and broken night's rest they had had.

In process of time, the "young missus"—that is to say, the daughter of the owner, whether male or female, made her appearance in the kitchen.

"Keep's a," Adam whispered to Tom; "that's a lassie I met yesterday at Corbridge." Tom's brow darkened a little, as he asked—

"Do you ken Mary, too?"

"Aha!" Adam chuckled; "she's a freend o' yours, is she?—ay, ye were aye trocking among the lassies, Tam, and no a bad judge either—she's a fine lassie this, and will no do us ony harm, or I'm mista'en."

"You wish to have"—Mary began, looking in at the door, but starting back a little on recognizing its inmates—then instantly, with that presence of mind which the fair sex possess so pre-eminently over their lords, with a sign to intimate that she enjoined silence, proceeded—"you wish to have something to eat and drink, young men? I will bring it to you directly."

Ere she brought it, she sent the girl out of the kitchen; and as she set the viands before the two lads, she said in a subdued tone—

"Don't seem as if you had seen me before or known me. My father is a widower. I am his only child, and he is very jealous of any acquaintances I may make. I had great difficulty to get him to take me with him yesterday, as he went to Stagshawbank, and to leave me at Corbridge until he returned there on his way back, that I might go and see the great sights at Hexham. I hear him coming down stairs. Call for what you like, and stay as long as suits you; but be sure not speak to me as if you had ever seen me before."

While Adam and Tom were doing justice to the simple but good fare set before them, they heard Mary say to her father—a strong, vulgar

looking man, much tanned by exposure to the weather—

"There are two lads getting breakfast in Number Two—they seem strangers."

"Can they pay the reckoning?" was the father's question.

"I should think so," Mary replied; "they seem very respectable, and are very well dressed; but I'll ask them to pay for what they've got, before I give them any thing more."

"That's a good lass; I say, Mary," he added, "be sure that Joe takes that big box w' him to Newcastle to-day. It lumburs up all the room. It's not heavy—it is only a returned package, and nothing to pay for it."

"Who is it for, father?"

"Joe knows—it is for Plummer of the Crown and Anchor—it came here while thou wert at thy aunt's, with some of those things which are—"

The sentence probably finished with a sign, which the Scotchmen did not see. The host added—

"I shall have to go at noon to Fibson's, and Joe can not be here till one, at soonest: so don't forget it."

Mary then sat down to breakfast with her father, who went out as soon as it was finished. He kept going out and in, seemingly much occupied with his affairs, and to have lost all recollection of the customers in Number Two. At intervals, when he went out, Mary exchanged a few words with the two lads, from whom she learned enough to understand their position, which she said she would aid them in extricating themselves from as far as lay in her power, although she could not at present see how they ought to act.

Thus they continued to sit—sometimes whispering to each other, sometimes dozing—when a voice was heard at the door toward the street which made Macduff start.

"I tell thee, Wilson, that I am neither mad nor drunk. I have met with enough to make me the first; and although I have tasted pretty freely this morning, I know what I am saying and what I am about as well as thou, I guess."

"It is Michael Plummer, the landlord of the Crown and Anchor at Newcastle," Tom whispered to Adam; "I hope to goodness he'll no look in here."

Plummer had then entered the kitchen with the landlord.

"Ah, Mary, lass, how goeth it?" he said, chucking Mary under the chin. "Let's have summat good, pretty one—some of that real Snachts I sent your father last week. You'll water that well, Wilson, before you give it to your customers, else thou'll be a precious fool."

"Here, sir, in here," Mary said, as she saw Plummer advancing toward Number Two; "you'll be more comfortable here, it is cleaner and nicer," as she placed the flasks and cans in Number One, into which Michael staggered.

"I say, Plummer," the landlord demanded, *after they had sat down*, "what is all this?

what hath brought thee here in such a plight? Why, man, thou dost not seem to have been shaved for a week past."

"It's that devil, the Captain," Michael replied, "who is the cause of it all; he's always getting into some infernal scrape or other.—Capital Snachts this, Wilson; I pledge thee. He's got some petticoats in tow now—contraband, I'll answer for it—eh, Wilson? And we have had the devil to pay about them, and will have more yet, if I guess right. Thunder and lightning, Wilson," he added, in a lower tone, "there has been blood already drawn in the affair!"

"Blood, Michael! that's serious; I hoped we were not to have had any more of that there work?"

"It was thus, thou seest, Wilson—my service to you: first there came some Sawneys—soldiers, you know—and one of them says, Where's Maelstrom? I reply, Why, how the devil should I know? Then there comes a Southron as fine as Solomon in all his glory, and he says, Michael, my boy, take me to Maelstrom. Says I, How the mischief should I know where he is?—My service to you, landlord—Wilson, ay, Landlord Wilson—Will of the cave, isn't it? Aha! think I don't know, eh? Well, where was I? Oh! ah!—Take me to Maelstrom, says he. I'll see you at the bottomless deep first, says I. I'll send you there, says he, with this good blade. Thank you, says I, I am in no hurry whatever. So, thinks I, I would rather Maelstrom went than I, eh? So, my service to you, Maelstrom—landlord, I mean; pity that Maelstrom should not have breathing time. So I sends Gainsby—no, not Grimsby, Gregory. Gregory, says I, go to—you know where, and say there are hawks abroad, and one of them is to be down upon him this night. And so he sends a shaft at Deborah—no, not Deborah, poor thing—at the Southron; and so—but it was an ugly sight, Wilson, very ugly. My head is somewhat confused with it, eh?"

"Michael," the landlord said, rising, "I must leave thee just now; I shall be back in an hour or two. Go to bed, Plummer, go to bed, and we shall go over the matter after thou hast had a sleep—thou hast need of it. Mary, get Michael Plummer to bed, he is over-fatigued; I shall come back from Fibson's as soon as possible."

Mary was thus left with the half-drunken, half-asleep, half-driven-distracted Newcastle innkeeper, whom she attempted in vain to persuade to go to bed.

"Deborah, my dear—Mary, I mean—my pretty lass, my service to you; your father is a little queer to-day, God bless him—a worthy man, but given a little to—we won't say what, Deborah. Bed? no, no, I couldn't sleep; I have not slept for three nights. Sleep—bless your pretty heart, eh? Mary, thou'rt a good lass—nobody in the house, lass, eh? I don't like being alone, pretty one—nobody in the house, eh?"

"He doesna' ken me," Adam whispered to Tom; "I dinna like that lassie left to manage a brute beast like that alane. I'll go to him."

Adam Peebles, accordingly, came round into the adjoining apartment by such a route as to seem to have come from the street.

"Hallo, lassie!" he called out briskly, "do you keep any thing in the drink line here?"

"Oh yes, sir," Mary replied, understanding at once his object, "we have the best of every thing here; what's your will, sir?"

"Yes," Michael murmured from within, "real stuff, no mistake about it—honest fellows to drink it with, too—eh, Deborah—Mary, I mean? My service to you, sir"—to Adam, who looked in—"enter; this is no ca—cavern—all straight and above-board here."

"This is a capital brewst indeed, sir," Adam said, smacking his lips. "My service to ye, sir; this wasna' brewed in Durham, I'se warrant."

"Scotch, I see, eh?" Michael hiccupped out. "Sawneys always pay—reckon, however, eh?—devilish close, eh?—brewed in Durham? I should think not—Holland, Mister Scotchman."

"Ye have nae merchants here that deal wi' Holland, I should think," the Scotchman inquired.

"Here? right, Sawney—here, none. Crown and Anchor, Newcastle—that's the place—cellars—caves—caverns, eh? Think we don't know a bit, you northern cattle! Maelstrom in the north—cunning—blast the women!"

In ejaculations such as these, becoming every minute less and less intelligible, Michael Plummer at last fell off his seat, sound asleep, or rather dead drunk on the floor. The contraband innkeeper, wearied out with watching, his naturally weak mind hunted and troubled with the scenes he had witnessed, and now first over-excited, and then stupefied with the liquor to which he had fled for relief, had at last yielded to the power of sleep, and lay a helpless and senseless mass in the arms of that which he so much required, and which could alone have saved his mind at such a crisis.

A sudden thought struck Adam Peebles.

"Mary, lassie, what o'clock is it?"

"Nearly one o'clock."

"You're looking every minute for Joe wi' the wagon?"

"Yes, what of that?"

Adam, instead of replying to her, looked into Number Two.

"Macduff, come here."

Macduff came out.

"Help me to draw that box nearer that sleeping brute," Adam said.

"What the devil are ye after?" Tom asked.

"Never you mind; lend me a hand here."

The box was brought near Plummer's insensible body. It was long, wide, deep, and partly filled with straw.

"Tak' had o' his heels there, Tam, and I'll tak' the head. Yo ho! up wi' him—there he

goes; now in wi' him into the box and steal the lid. That's it; there's a bed for him."

"But we can't have that great thing standing on the floor," Mary said.

"Ye needna' be feared, my lags. When will Joe come, think ye?" Adam asked.

"What is it ye are after, Adam Peebles? Did ye drink any thing wi' that chield?"

"Ye're fey, I think," Tom observed.

"Ye're twa gommerils," Adam replied; "whar can this beast be better than in his ain house?"

The expected wagon stopped at the door, and Joe looked in to ask if there were any thing for Newcastle.

"Step in, Joe, and take a glass," Mary said; "there is that large box there for the Crown and Anchor."

"It's a wee bit heavy for ye," Adam said, "to lift in yoursel' into the cart; this chield, I dare say, will give me a hand."

Adam and Tom then, with some difficulty, lifted the box into the cart, and Joe drove off, whistling, and little dreaming what merchandise he was carrying.

The Scotchmen stood holding their sides with laughter; but Mary looked very serious.

"What can I say to my father?" she asked.

"Pooh! tell him that Michael Plummer in his drunkenness insisted on accompanying the box, that you did all you could to hinder him, but being only a lone woman you hadna pith enough to keep him back. But, Mary," Adam added, "what shall we do?—that's a far mair serious affair."

"Take yourselves off without an instant's delay," Mary replied; "step down the way there to my aunt's, Dame Wilson—she lives first house to the left on turning the first corner—and wait there till I come to consult with you."

A noise, as of a multitude on the street, sent Peebles and Macduff back to their corners in No. 2 instead of going out in search of Mary's aunt. Mary herself went to the door. It was a party of the courtiers returning from the chase and followed by a crowd attracted by the show of the dresses, the cries of the dogs and of the huntsmen, and—not the least interesting part of such processions—the servants carrying the spoil, among which a wild boar of enormous proportions figured conspicuously.

Two of the cavaliers, attracted doubtless by Mary's pretty face, reined in their horses at the door, inquiring if the Golden Cross was the hostelry of that name famous for its good wine. Mary's reply was, of course, in the affirmative. One of them said—

"We had better dismount, Taunton, and put it to the proof; the sign at the door is good, whatever the one above it may indicate."

And Sir Reginald Taunton and the Templar, Cavendish, stepped into the kitchen, where Mary seemed so much annoyed with their conduct, that the two Scotchmen had difficulty in lying quiet. She, however, persuaded at last the two cavaliers to go into No. 1, where she

placed on the table the flasks they had ordered. In a few minutes afterward, Wilson, the landlord, entered the kitchen, in company with a rough, sailor-looking man. They two went into No. 3, where Mary set some of the veritable *Snachts* before them. Tom and Adam were thus between two fires, from which at present they saw no possibility of escaping.

"What hath brought thee, too, Grimsby?" the landlord said to his companion in No. 3. "Plummer has come already this morning. Is Plummer to bed, Mary?"

"No, father, he is gone off with the box to Newcastle."

"The poor devil did not seem fit for the journey," Wilson remarked; "but he'll have a good sleep in the wagon. What is all this to do, Grimsby, at the store?"

"Why, Bill, I'm doomed if I can tell thee," Grimsby grumbled out; "what with knights in armor sick, and women squalling and warming poultices and gruel, the caves don't look like themselves—no, they don't, Bill. The captain may curse with his d—d French oaths as he likes, but I can't stand it—no, I can't; and what is more, I won't."

"What am I to understand," Cavendish said to Taunton, in No. 1, "by this story of the escape of two Scotchmen?"

"Pooh!" Taunton replied, "John Lackland is always looking for and therefore always seeing scarecrows. He picked up, on his Hexham trip, two Sawneys, whom he thought could do him either harm or good—I could not very well make out which—and he put them in limbo for not answering his questions, from which the drunkenness of their guards enabled them to escape. I wish I had hold of the rogues; they must be rather clever fellows to get the better of John Lackland; and I am in want of two or three Scotchmen with address and cunning enough to act as ferrets for us in Scotland. I have my doubts regarding Maelstrom, and shall have to watch his movements, as well to inquire after this new eloper from Sherwood."

"John had better let that quest alone," Cavendish replied. "If he does not rouse the friends of that woman by persecuting her, I do not think she will do him any harm. As to that supposed son of the Lady Ada, I treat it as a pure fiction. We, with Mauners, did for the mother and child too securely to leave any doubt on that subject."

"But, Cavendish, how often must I tell thee," Taunton replied, "that the skeleton found on opening the grave was that of a female child?"

"Pooh! there is not a sufficient difference between them," Cavendish answered, "in that stage of decomposition to warrant the conclusion the ignorant fool who opened the grave arrived at."

"Then what dost thou purpose to do, Grimsby?" Wilson inquired, in No. 3.

"Stay here, Wilson, I suppose, until I see the upshot of the affair."

"That thou canst not do, gossip, any how. If any of these hawks of Monk-Wearmouth see thee here, I may flit at once. Thou must leave this, and that incontinent. Why, what is it to thee if there be women making a fuss in the store? although Maelstrom will ruin us all one of these days if he go on dealing in such merchandise; he did us enough harm with that foreign lady and the two children some years ago. As for thee, thou hast provision and drink enough were the caves even in a state of siege. So thou must make thyself invisible here, any how."

"I must, however, go on with the quest," Taunton said to Cavendish, "in appearance, if not in reality, else John will become unmanageable. It was a good thought on thy part to send Mauners with Glenorchy; but to make a knight of that landless and penniless slave, although it might become John Lackland, does not argue much respect toward the slave's master."

"And if thou hadst seen the fool," Cavendish rejoined, "how he was bedizened out next morning; i' faith, thy wrath would have given place to mirth. I wish the proud Highland chief—that unlicked cub, Glenorchy—joy of his companion. But what had we best do now, Taunton?—something, it is clear, must be done. Absurd as the rumor may be, we must not allow it to gain ground. It is quite enough that we have a real sister to put to silence; which we are bound to do, seeing that we allowed her to escape out of our hands—it will be rather too much to have a nephew, real or supposititious, constantly haunting John Lackland's suspicious soul."

Just then the discussion between Wilson and Grimsby in No. 3, which had risen into altercation, assumed the form of a struggle, in the course of which Grimsby was pushed out violently into the kitchen, followed by Wilson. To escape from him he ran into No. 2, where he called out—

"Hallo! whom have we here? That Scotch spy, and another of the same kidney. Unkennel, ye eaves-droppers, unkennel!"

The struggle was now transferred to No. 2, in which Wilson took part, while Mary at the door was doing her best to keep him back. The Templar and Sir Reginald Taunton came out of the other division.

"What is all this, my pretty lass?" the Templar inquired; "some of thy lovers quarreling, eh?"

"It began, sir, with that sailor and my father," Mary replied; "do get them out of that place, or they may injure each other."

The appearance of the two cavaliers in the kitchen brought Grimsby and Wilson to their senses. They came forth, and Tom and Adam were obliged to follow them. Wilson's instant doffing of his cap, and his apologizing attitude and face declared him to be the landlord.

"These are pretty proceedings, mine host," the Templar said, "while thy monarch and his

court art in thy neighborhood. Who are those three, man?"

"He, there, at the window, is a fellow—"

"Have a care, Wilson," Grimsby grumbled, "or I shall peach."

"You seem a pretty covey, take you altogether," Cavendish said; "and who are those young men?—they don't look as if they belonged to your gang."

"Grimsby there says they are Scotch; I know nothing of them myself."

"Scotch?" Taunton said quickly. "Two Scotch lads in Durham. Come this way, my lads!"

He took them back again into the division they had left, looking first carefully to see that there were no listeners in the others.

"Now," he said in an under tone, so as not to be heard in the kitchen, "I know you to be the two who made their escape last night. Nay, attempt no denial—it will avail you nothing. Besides, ye have overheard what would justify me in putting you out of the way. One word from me to the Templar here or to King John, and ye are gone men. There is but one way to do with you; and ye have too much acuteness not to avail yourselves of that which I now offer you. I intend to take you into my service. Ye shall go south with me first, that I may take you out of the way of King John. Perhaps, if I find that I can rely on you, I may send one or other, or both of you, into Scotland, on a very important service. Let me first see if I can have dependence on you, and you will find Reginald Taunton an indulgent master. What say ye? But why need I ask—there are before you either the service of him who will protect you, even against the royal displeasure and all its consequences—or those consequences without an hour's delay."

"Gie us twa minutes, Sir Reginald, to consider your offer," Adam said.

Sir Reginald stepped out into the kitchen, and whispered something to the Templar.

In the mean time, Adam said to Macduff—

"What else can we do, Tam? I think we should close wi' him at once. There's nae saying what may happen—the gaun foot's aye getting—and I heard enough of what thae twa gallowa-birds said to ane anither to mak' me wish to hear mair. It has something to do wi' baith your master and mine, or I'm very far wrong. What say ye, Tam?"

"Indeed, Adam," Macduff replied, "if I kent what to do, or even if I were out o' this scrape, if I kent whar I could gae to do ony gude, I would almost tak' my chance o' the king rather than serve sic a couple. But as I canna see my way otherwise, I think we maun just do as ye say, and mak' the best we can o' a bad bargain."

The lads stepped out into the kitchen, and said to Sir Reginald that they were ready and willing to accompany him.

"Take heed," the latter said to Wilson and Grimsby, "that not one word escape you of what has passed here to-day, or the Golden

Cross shall soon cease to exist in Durham. Prepare two horses for those young men: they shall be sent back to you from Barnard Castle."

In a few minutes afterward—during which both Adam and Tom whispered, one after the other, something to Mary, which nobody but herself heard—the Templar and Sir Reginald Taunton were on their way to Barnard Castle, followed by Adam and Tom as equerries.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LION'S MOUTH.

THE two cavaliers, with their two Scottish attendants, rode briskly over the wide plain, which extends from the valley of the Wear at Durham, to the steep bank of the Tees. When within sight of that charming country, and ere descending toward Barnard Castle, Sir Reginald Taunton slackened his pace, and the Templar rode rapidly forward. The former by-and-by stopped altogether, and called on the two young men to advance.

"I begin early, young men," he said, "to put your fidelity to the test. It may appear a somewhat severe ordeal; but the service I shall afterward require at your hands will be of such a nature, and the matters—of which you know probably part already—committed to your keeping of such high import, that I can not feel justified in taking you more fully into my confidence, until I have a proof, which it is impossible to mistake, of your courage, as well as of your readiness to serve me even at the peril of your lives.

"Ye must have overheard in the hostelry, that this Templar, this Sir William Cavendish, who hath passed on before us, is one from whom I differ widely in opinion in regard to the matters with which we are charged by our sovereign King John. Of a verity—he drew close to them as he spoke this, in an earnest, subdued tone—"our quest is ruined if we continue thus tied as in a leash together; he impedeth me at every step—he must be removed."

He paused to see the effect this intimation had on his hearers. Tom looked at Adam, dismay in every feature; Adam looked at Taunton fixedly, but calmly.

"On our arrival at Barnard Castle—the fortress you see below there on this side of the river—you will be ushered into an ante-chamber. I shall pass through it to another room by a door covered by the arras. When I lift that arras from within, and call 'Advance!' ye will rush into the inner chamber, and plunge your dirks in the breast of the Templar. Make haste to escape immediately afterward; mount your horses and go southward, taking the road on this side of the water. I shall lose no time in following you."

"Murdering was nae part o' our paction," Adam said.

"I make it so now," the knight said; "you

do my bidding, or take the alternative of being shut up in a dungeon below here, to be from thence handed over to the King of England."

"Or turn our horses here," Adam answered calmly, "and tak' our chance either of escaping ye baith, or of gaun straight to the king, and telling him twa or three things that would astonish him a wee."

"Insolent!" Sir Reginald exclaimed, laying his hand on his sword.

"Insolent it may be, but resolute when the occasion demands it," Adam replied proudly. "Ye needna' bluster and lay your hand on your sword that way, Sir Reginald; ye are alane here, and we twa could soon break the leash ye speak about, by letting free the ither hound. Na, na, Sir Reginald Taunton; understand the men ye've got to deal wi'! We'll do your biddin' in a' things reasonable; and I dinna object for my part to rid ye o' that Templar, for private reasons of our ain—ye needna glowr in that way—we can hae our ain reasons, as ye have yours. But let it be understood, ance and for aye, Sir Reginald, that we are not in your service as valets, or serving-men—we are to be in your confidence for a special purpose—in which we will aid you to the utmost of our power, provided we are not called upon to do any thing contrar to our allegiance to our lawfu' sovereign—King William the Lion of Scotland."

This was an extraordinary exertion in the way of eloquence for Adam Peebles, and he breathed after it, Macduff alleged afterward, as if he had just attained the summit of Ben-y-Gloe.

"There is some truth in what you say, young man," Sir Reginald rejoined, "and I do not dislike your frankness—although, perhaps, a little more respect in your manner would be becoming. Follow me, then, and let me see ye as firm in deeds as one of ye at least is in words."

When the knight was at a little distance in advance of them again, Macduff said—

"This is an awfu' job, Adam. Had we no better turn our horses, and mak' the best o' our way back?"

"Wheesht, Tam: if we're nothing waur to do than rid ourselves o' that man wi' the cat's een, our service will no be to complain o'. Just keep a quiet sough, and do as I do."

On arriving at the Castle, after having partaken of some refreshments in the hall, they were shown up, as Sir Reginald had said, to an ante-chamber through which the knight passed, and, lifting the arras, went into another room beyond.

Macduff's agitation now became extreme.

"I canna understand, Adam," he said, "what we would be at. Ye seem to me to be as unconcerned as if it were a nowt, and not a man, we were about to stick."

"Have your dirk ready, Tam, and haud your tongue."

Just then Sir Reginald lifted the arras, and pronounced the dreaded word—

"Advance!"

Adam hurried into the room, followed with very faltering steps by Macduff, and was bringing his dirk down over the shoulder of Cavenish, who sat near the fire, with his back turned to the door, when Taunton called out—but not in time to prevent Adam giving the Templar, as if irresistibly, a slight wound, accompanied by a right hearty blow on the shoulder—

"Hold! it is enough; retire and order the horses."

As the young men were on their way to the court-yard, Macduff said—

"That was a terrible risk we ran, Adam; would ye really have ran your dirk into that chield?"

"There would have been nae great harm in the act, Tam; the world would have had ae villain less to put up wi': but I kent weel enough there would have been nae sticking in the case—he meant it only to try us."

"But, Adam, what made ye sae sure o' that?"

"Several things, Tam. In the first place, corbies dinna pick out corbies' een. In the second place, when they mak' up their minds to jobs o' that description, they dinna employ newcomers like us, nor expose their plots in the open day, and on the public road. Na, na; I saw what he was after, and he saw weel enough that I saw through him. What he wanted, was first to try my depth, and then to ascertain whether you would follow me impleecitly, or no. If I had told you, you would have gone bauidly on—and that's no your character, and he would have seen in a minute, that if I had sense enough to comprehend him, I hadna sense enough to keep my ain counsel. We have every ane o' us our characters, Tam, and the best thing we can do in this sinfu' world is, to mak' the maist o' the ane we have, and no try to act twa—it doesna gae down wi' sensible folk."

Four splendid horses, two caparisoned for knights and two for squires, were brought forth, and the party set off in due order, and at a brisk pace. They were soon out of the valley of the Tees, then beginning to bud forth in all its beauty; they had a brief glance of Richmond, even then remarkable for the situation of its Castle and the richness of the woods; crossed the Wharf at Harewood by a ford a little above where the bridge has since been built, and rested their horses at the village beyond, bearing the same name. Leeds, then strongly fortified, and innocent of Quakers and broad-cloth, they did not enter; but at Sheffield, then, like Leeds, strong in its castle and defenses, and even then noted for descriptions of cutlery, under the names of broad-swords, bolts, and arrow-heads, they stopped for the night.

Tempted by the beauty of the evening, the two Scotchmen strolled out to survey those mighty Saxon defenses which have been replaced by fragile imitations, indeed, of their frowning towers, but by operations within them, mightier than all that ancient art—and the art of defense was then chiefest of all—ere prac-

ticed or ere dreamt of in its wildest flights of fancy or prophetic forethought.

They were leaning over the wall on the north side of the town, looking up the valley of the Shef or Chef, where the river came through banks, the exceeding beauty of which, even the smoke of modern toil has not been able altogether to spoil, when a lady and page passed them, walking very fast; but who slackened their speed sufficiently as they came near for the lady to say to Adam—

"Endeavor to delay those persons who follow us, even were it but for a minute, and hide that paper until thou canst read it in secret."

The words were scarcely pronounced, and Adam had only time to pick up a scrap of parchment, and force it under his doublet, when, to their no little surprise, Sir Reginald and the Templar turned the corner of one of the square towers of the donjon, and called out, even before they reached the two young men—

"Have you seen a lady and page pass quickly this way?"

"Yes," Adam replied at once.

"In what direction have they gone?"

"By that street which leads to the gate farthest awa."

"By the far gate there, do you mean?"

"Yes, straight down that way, forby the turns," Adam answered, glad when he saw them quickly disappear in that direction, as the pursued had gone on the other path, and at no great distance had taken refuge at a sudden turn in the wall of the fortress. The lady, leaving the page there, returned toward the two friends. She was tall, and as far as could be judged by the imperfect light, and through the veil which enveloped her whole form, of most dignified appearance. Addressing Adam, she said—

"Faithful adherent of Sir Robert de Moredun, I can well understand the motives which have influenced thee to enter the service of these men. They take thee to Sherwood. The risk ye run is great; but I shall watch and guard your steps as far as in my power. I had given thee directions on that parchment, Adam Peebles, lest I had failed in the attempt to speak to thee, how thou and thy companion may escape from Sherwood, should circumstances suddenly demand it. Taking the path which leads from a chapel near the castle, in a direction opposite from that detested mansion, ye will, at the first cottage, find two steeds always in readiness. It is a path seldom trod by any of the domestics. A way, too, unknown to them, from the castle to that chapel, I myself will point out to you. Be courageous, and show the same watchfulness thou hast done hitherto. For a brief space of time, farewell!"

The speaker rejoined her companion, and they were soon lost to view amidst the windings of the wall. Adam and Tom returned to the inn in a state of considerable bewilderment—the latter beseeching the former by the way to make an attempt to escape during the night,

which however Adam steadily refused. Sir Reginald and the Templar sent for them, and questioned them very closely respecting the lady and page, but they persisted in the same story. It might have been some suspicion of not having been told the exact truth which led Cavendish to open the following catechetical battery; and if it be considered that the questions were put by an individual whose looks would have fitted him for being grand inquisitor; whose sharp features, piercing eyes—the pupils of which distended and contracted like those of the lynx—high narrow forehead, and long ears, made Macduff afterward allege to Adam that "if he werena the arch-fiend himsel', he was a very near relation," it may be supposed that it required some firmness of countenance and presence of mind to come through the ordeal. Fortunately Adam had previously given Tom the cue, in case of being so questioned.

"Sir Reginald Taunton, it appeareth to me, hath been somewhat overhasty in taking you two into his service," the Templar said. "At all events, he ought to have known somewhat of your antecedents"—a word which puzzled Macduff sadly. "You are both Scotch, I understand?"

This having been answered in the affirmative, he addressed his more minute inquiries first to Tom, and it was to ask him from what part of Scotland he came.

"Frae the Highlands," Tom replied.

"That's a wide word," lynx-eye said. "From what part of the Highlands, pray?"

"Frae Argyle," Tom answered undauntedly; "the country o' Maccallum-More."

"Wide enough yet. Pray have you ever heard of a Sir Dougal Campbell in that part of the country?"

"I should rather think eae," the Highlandman answered; "though it's a far cry to Loch Owe."

This answer was lucky, and made Cavendish and Taunton exchange very satisfied looks. The Templar again contracted his pupils, and fixed them on Adam.

"And you, what part of Scotland sent you forth?"

"A part that lies ow're near England for onybody to rest quietly at hame in it—frae the south."

"Wide as the other, and still more vague," Cavendish remarked.

"Ye're right, your reverence," Adam replied "for it's wider since King William added Northumberland to it, and its main vague than ever since the King o' England, they say, is gane to tak' it back again; but I dinna ken muckle about the borders farther south than Jeddart, whar justice, they say, ends, and every body for himsel' begins. I think mysel' the line o' demarkation might be taken frae Selkirk, for the south there are mair particular about the quality of their leather than about the side o' the Cherrie the beeves were fed upon."

"Peace, sirrah!" the Templar cried, with

emphasis intended also for Sir Reginald; "thou art as forward with thy tongue as with thy dirk, methinks. What service were you in in Scotland?"

Taunton gave Adam a look, as much as to say that he did not wish the Templar to be aware of their having been equerries of Moredun and De Hastings. Adam took the hint, and replied—

"We were in the service o' twa brithers, Macconochie by name. They were on their travels. But they were Scotchmen only by name, for they didna count the cost weel afore they set out. By the time they reached Durham they found that twa mouths were enough to feed instead o' four, and sae they gave us our leave. We were just confabbing thegither in the Golden Cross at Durham about setting off for Monk-Wearmouth to see if we could get cheap back that way to Scotland, when Sir Reginald made us an offer; and right glad were we to forgather wi' him, for places are unco difficult to meet wi' in the north, unless ane was content wi' saut herring, and wi' could kail het again for a change sometimes."

"Well, you may have something better for the rest of your lives, if I find you faithful," Sir Reginald said, anxious now to get them out of the Templar's hands. "You will breakfast here to-morrow, ere setting out. Go, now, to bed."

The day was so far advanced when they left Sheffield, that the heat made the shades of Sherwood Forest peculiarly acceptable. As they entered one of the picturesque glades which abounded on the northern outskirts of the wood, the cavaliers reined in their steeds, and desired Adam and Tom to draw near.

"We approach the end of our journey," Sir Reginald said, "and it is now necessary that I give you some explanations regarding its object, and the duties which it will impose on you. I need scarcely tell intelligent lads, as you seem to be, that the King of England, whom we have the happiness to serve, and who is possessed of qualities which make him as much loved by those who have access to him intimately as he is feared by those who only know him as a powerful king; that he is hemmed in and tormented by the number of those who claim relationship with the royal family—some of whom put forth pretensions of the most audacious kind. The most important—those of Arthur, son of Geoffrey—*are terminated by his death; but there still remains one which is two-fold—being those of a woman who pretends that she is a daughter of Henry the Second, and older than our Sovereign; and not only this, but that the child of a woman who died here in this forest, and who was privately married, according to her story, with King Richard, still lives; although it was well known here that the child died, and was buried along with its mother, as is evidenced by the monumental marble erected by the king himself in a chapel not far from the palace of Sherwood. The late king never denied the paternity of the child, and his affection for the*

mother; but he always utterly rebutted the assertion of a marriage, and there are witnesses in the palace itself who can certify the death both of the mother and child. I have found that the woman, who pretends to be an older sister of the king, has taken refuge in Scotland, but where I can not discover; in which country she also insists the child of the wife of the king's brother still lives."

After a pause, in which he seemed to give time for his two auditors to reflect on what he had said, the cavalier continued—

"What then is required on your part is, in the first place, to satisfy yourselves, from the evidence you will receive at the palace of Sherwood, to which we approach, that the pretensions of that woman, in regard at all events to the child, are utterly without foundation: and then to search out where she has taken refuge in Scotland, and either to treat with her, or to communicate the same to me, through a channel prepared for that purpose; so that I may be able to set the mind of my sovereign at rest; either by an arrangement with this woman, or by a public refutation of her absurd claims."

"You see," he continued, after another pause, "you see the frankness with which we have communicated every particular to you. For a quest of this nature, natives of Scotland itself have many advantages over strangers, especially Englishmen, of whom there is a great jealousy on the part of the Scotch, arising, in no small degree, from the circumstance—a very impolitic one, I will go the length of confessing to you—of placing English soldiers in the strong towns of Scotland, and of openly placing an English spy at the Scottish court. You now can also understand with what readiness a very ample reward will be awaiting your exertions, if prosecuted with energy and success; and what a fearful retribution will be in store for any violation of the confidence reposed in you."

Without waiting for any reply, the cavaliers spurred on, and in a few minutes the towers of Sherwood Castle were seen rising above the trees of the forest.

King John had chosen a picturesque as well as a very retired spot, for this scene of his secret amours, to which he gave only the modest name of a hunting-seat; a title which the numerous towers, the wide moat, and the strength of the works which defended the drawbridge, rendered any thing rather than appropriate. Perhaps the well-known character of the forest formed some excuse for defenses, which would otherwise have been misplaced around a summer residence, and a mere retreat for the royal huntsmen; but if any faith is to be placed in the traditions of Sherwood, that retreat had too often witnessed scenes for which the pretense of hunting was but a flimsy cloak, and the chambers had need indeed of thick walls, and of narrow casements, to hide from the world and from the light of day the deeds perpetrated there. Those traditions went so far as to say that Ar

thur, his nephew, and the legitimate heir to that crown which John had usurped, had been waylaid in France; but instead of being drowned in the Seine, as was alleged, had been brought over to the Castle of Sherwood, and poniarded there by his uncle's own hand. The hunting-seat of Sherwood had need, then, of a wide moat, and of very massive defenses—against sounds from within, if not against assaults from without.

Whatever were the claims of this remarkable building, either to wonder or inquiry, on its own account, the spot in which it was placed was well calculated to impress the visitor with feelings of awe and fear. In the thickest grove of Sherwood, almost incapable of being approached, save by those who were habituated to its intricacies, this dark building, rendered still more sombre by its vicinage, reared its dismal towers. There was no variety—no break in the ground to give even the character of picturesque to the scene; the gnarled oaks threw their aged branches around in all imaginable forms; the beeches sent up their straight white trunks, and the sycamores protruded their grotesque roots, so that each would have formed a study for a painter of more modern times; but these forms and freaks of nature were but as the garniture of the cell of the alchemist—they were in themselves varied, singular, and some of them beautiful; but they only served to give, as a whole, a deeper feeling of melancholy, and of superstitious awe, to those who approached the dread abode.

With such feelings, aggravated by the information which had previously been given them, and by a sentiment of the responsibility which attached to the task they had undertaken, our two young Scotchmen approached the hunting-seat of John, King of England. Neither attempted to say a word to the other—the feeling of oppression was too strong to admit of speech.

Sir Reginald sounded a horn, hung at the end of the drawbridge, the notes of which seemed to be recognized; for the bridge was immediately lowered, and the party crossed under an archway which led into a courtyard, where they were immediately waited upon by several attendants in the royal livery, who took their steeds in charge, led the young men into a hall, where abundant provision of every sort was laid out, and conducted the cavaliers by another staircase into a different part of the building. When left alone at the refreshment table, Macduff said to Peebles—

"This is a pretty position we have got into, Adam!"

"No to complain of ava', Tam," Adam replied; "wi' this venison-pasty before us, and thae twa stoups o' wine at our side."

"It isna the table nor what's on it," Tam answered, "that I complain o'—it is the eeriness o' this place, and the queer job we've got by the hand."

"Keep yoursel' easy, Macduff," Adam said,

"it's the best job ever cam in our way, as yell find. I see through't a' better than that chield thinks. But let us keep a quiet sough—that's our game at present, as the parchment says. Here's to ye, Tam—may ne'er warse be among us, as the nian said at the burial o' his wife."

"Well, ye're a queer chap, Adam," Tam replied, "and a long-headed, as I've aye said—I tie mysel' to your apron-string—here's to you, Adam Peebles: I wish our gude King William had some sic clever chaps about him, instead o' sic auld doited carles as that Allan o' Galway, that gae the prize to Tavish o' Birnam ow'r the head o' my faither."

Sir Reginald sent for them to say, that, as the day was now far advanced, he would defer until the morrow putting them in the way of obtaining the information of which he had spoken. In the mean time, he consigned them to the major-domo Benson, who took them to the servant's hall, where the arrival of new-comers was always welcome, and where they had no cause to complain of their reception: indeed Adam alleged that before dinner was over, Tom had ingratiated himself so much into the good graces of Elgitha, one of the waiting-maids, that he thought the coast ought to be left perfectly open to himself with Mary, on his return.

In the evening, all in the hall formed a semicircle round a blazing fire—there being no lack of fuel at that time in Sherwood.

"Dinna ye find it dull here in the winter time?" Adam asked.

"Oh, by no means," Benson replied; "we just lay on the logs more plentifully on the fires, and fill the cans more frequently. Indeed, we have nothing to disturb our very pleasant lives here, if it were not the ridiculous stories that some of the wenches bring us, to the fire-side sometimes, about ghosts and such like fooleries."

"Nea, doant thee now call them things by siccen names, Benson," one of the stable-boys said, entreatingly; "if thee'dst seen as I ha'e seen i' th' forest, thou'dst talk a bit gently o' them things."

"Ay, thou mayest say so, Ralph," Elgitha remarked—"thou mayest well say so. I don't approve—no, that I don't—of speaking that way of t' other world."

Here Macduff began rather to change color; not so Benson, who affirmed that he would not believe in ghosts, even although he saw one, which he had never done yet; adding—

"And as to the other world, Elgitha, whert is it, my lass?"

"Fye, Benson, fye!" the girl answered; "thou wilt see something some day to thy hurt, if thou talk thus. Any one to tell me, after what I have seen, that the little chapel down there is not haunted, is to tell me that he don't believe in nothing."

"What did you see, Elgitha?" several voices cried at once.

"Why, as I were coming from Mansfield,"

the maid replied, "but the other evening—it wer'n't dark, for there was the moon, I saw summat white look out at the chapel-door, and shut it again without any noise."

"Ay, but," Ralph chimed in with, "that's nought to what I see, i' th' place where the Lady Ada hanged hersel'—"

"Hush, Ralph, hush," rose from all the circle.

"Awell, at *the tree*," Ralph continued, "I see a summat lying—it were like Nannie the white goat; and I says, Nan, Nan, when up gets the white thing i' the shape o' a woman, and grew bigger and bigger, until I swafed wi' fright, and when I came round it was gone."

"But, Benson, at any rate you can not deny," another servant remarked, "that there are often noises in the west turret"—and here all present crossed themselves—"which neither Father Ernest, nor the sharp Templar now with Sir Reginald, have ever been able to discover the cause of."

"Rats," Benson said, "rats."

"Nay, thou'rt wrong there, Benson, any how," Elgitha said; "for after Tim the rat-catcher were here they were worse than ever."

"And then as to lights in the chapel," another said, "I'll swear to that myself."

"The groans in the room right under the turret," another added, "are contradicted by nobody—not even by Benson himself."

"Them things I count as nothing," Robin the huntsman sententiously observed; "I regard them as going on a false scent in the matter. It was he as came with the Lady Ada—he as was always so dreamy and queer-like—that man as ever saw strange things when any misfortin was about to happen; it was he as had to do wi' t' other world if ever man had. Ding me, if I ever could unearth that man and his strange stories. Don't you remember?—I heard him tell it himself in this very spot. He had been sent off to Sheffield for summat. Well, says he, that night of trouble when the bodies were found, when we were all round here as we are now—well, says he, it were a strange thing, as I sat i' the Green Dragon this day, I see sure I heard—I knows her voice so well, says he—Lady Ada say in my ear, Come, Allen, come. As I came over by Todholes I hear it again, says he; but this time, says he, I feel summat pass me in the air, as it were; but, says he, when I come into the lane as leads to the chapel, I sees, says he, straight afore me, as clear, says he, as I sees you, Robin—I sees, says he, a figure like my lady; and on, says he, she went, and I follows, until, says he, I saw hanging—"

"Bless us, what's that?" all called out at once, and even the cheeks of Benson blanched, while Elgitha sought refuge in the arms of Tom Macduff.

Adam lighted a torch and looked around the hall. One of the old cuirasses had fallen from its perch on the wall.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHERWOOD.

THAT night Tom Macduff went to bed in the same room with Adam, under the firm impression that before morning he would see something terrible; and it may be questioned if he would have gone to any room in the castle alone to sleep. The fatigues of the day soon, however, rendered him oblivious of all he had heard, and the sun was touching the tops of the turrets of Sherwood ere either he or Adam awoke.

Sir Reginald sent for them after breakfast, and led them to a part of the building at a distance from the rooms of state, where, in a small apartment, there was an old man seated who did not seem to regard the visit with any favor.

"These are the young Scotchmen I told you of, Jasper," the knight said, "to whom I wish you to give all the particulars you can remember respecting the death of the Lady Ada and her child. After you have done so, I wish them to see the monument in the chapel. You may not be able to go there; Benson can show it to them. When Jasper has finished his narration, young men, come down to the hall and ask for Benson—I shall instruct him with regard to your conduct."

While the knight spoke, and even after he had left the room, the old man continued to mumble something which sounded like a dislike of Scotchmen, and a request to let an old man die in peace. By-and-by, as he looked fixedly at the young men, his countenance assumed a milder expression, but one in which melancholy was strongly marked.

"Was it not enough," he said, "that we should have quests upon quests, after we had had sorrow upon sorrow here, but that all those things must be freshened up again? Woe is me! will there never be an end of these things? Ye look honest, my lads, and inexperienced, too; why is it that ye are brought to have your young minds darkened in the morning of life with tales of sorrow? Why is it that deeds such as these are not kept within the walls and the shades of the forest which witnessed them?"

Adam attempted to say a few words soothingly, but Jasper cut him short—

"Boys," he said, "boys, what is it ye can know of that which weigheth on the mind of old age? And yet," he added, surveying them both again attentively, "ye can not be minions of that man—why are ye here?"

Adam explained that Sir Reginald had met them on the streets of Durham, had engaged them to prosecute some inquiries in Scotland, of which country they were natives, and had brought them there first, to receive evidence that certain persons were dead.

"Ay, is it even so?" the old man said; "then hath the wicked fallen into the pit which his own hands have made. Young men, to ye

I will declare that truth which Sir Reginald and Cavendish think that even I am ignorant of. Hitherto I have told *his tale*, for they were his and his master's accomplices; the truth shall be told you, and this tottering frame will fall into the grave in peace. There is no holy man cometh nigh here to whom I can ease my soul; for as to that Cavendish, the Templar—see that no one listeneth.

"My brother Alfred and I were in all the freshness of youthful vigor, when we accompanied the lion-hearted Richard to the Holy Land. I shall not even touch upon our adventures there, much as there would be in them to interest young minds like yours—we may be interrupted here—suspicions will arise if I detain you long; I must keep myself, therefore, to the facts required to explain what afterward passed here at Sherwood.

"Isaac, King of Cyprus, whom Richard deposed when he placed Guy de Lusignan on his throne, had twin sisters in his seraglio, who arrived from Circassia only the day before, so exquisitely beautiful, that they were the theme of all the poets of the East. They resembled each other so closely in person and in feature—excepting a peculiar and frightful contraction of the forehead of the first-born when greatly excited—that they had to wear some distinctive mark either of dress or ornament. They differed only in one respect: Ada was proud, Zillah was meek as a lamb. Yet this distinction of character was only visible when circumstances of a trying nature arose; for when not excited, Ada seemed, if possible, the gentler of the two.

"For a man of King Richard's temperament to avoid falling in love with such women was impossible; but he had already suffered too much from the jealousy of the queen, and had too little confidence in himself to place them among her ladies. To lose them altogether was not to be thought of; so with a degree of prudence he did not often exhibit, he sent them to England, my brother Albert and I being in their suite, where they were to be consigned to the charge of old Cavendish of Hardwicke, whose son, the — Templar, now in this house, was one of the king's companions, and perhaps the most intimate of his friends.

"The sisters seemed to live very happily for some time after their arrival in this country. The old knight of Hardwicke was very kind to them, and loved them as if they had been children of his own; and they had the finest part of England to roam over, as if it had been their park—from Sherwood here to the wild country of the Peverils on the very north of Derbyshire. It was singular that Prince John did not find them out in his brother's absence; but their debarcation was well managed, and as both Albert and I were honest as well as faithful, in the charge which was committed to us, we contrived, without seeming to curb them, to prevent any intercourse with such as were *likely to inform that deceitful vicegerent.*

"Thus the time passed on, until King Richard returned to England. His stay was only brief; yet during that time he often visited the two ladies. It was to the elder, Ada, that he attached himself. On one occasion his brother John accompanied him, and soon after the younger sister, the Lady Zillah, went to reside at Chatsworth—a fortalice on the banks of the Derwent, after having been privately married, it was said, to Prince John, who for some time was ceaseless in his visits there.

"Events now came on so rapidly that I have difficulty in telling them to you in few words. John grew cold toward the Lady Zillah, and his visits became fewer and fewer, until they ceased entirely. He had the baseness to place this Cavendish as her keeper, alleging that his vow as a Templar fitted him for such an office. My brother Albert had been sent to Chatsworth, while I remained at Hardwicke; and he knew well what the indignities were to which the poor lady was subjected by her keeper, and which at last drove her away alone, and near her confinement, in a strange land and at an inclement season. She was never again seen or heard of. There was some talk of her body having been found in the Wye; but we never knew the truth of this. All that Albert ever would say on the subject of Chatsworth was, that there is an eye which seeth every where, even beneath the breast-plate of a Templar.

"The Lady Zillah's disappearance took place immediately after King Richard's departure for his last and fatal visit to his French dominions. The Lady Ada was inconsolable on account of his absence, and the loss of her sister. Prince John sent orders that she should be removed to this castle of Sherwood, in the view of her approaching confinement, as being more retired and suitable for such an occasion. Alas! we all feared that it was indeed more suitable for the purpose they had in view!

"To Sherwood, then, she was removed; and our fears began to give way to hopes of happiness and brighter days, when we saw her the mother of a fine boy, and saw liberty given to roam freely through the woods with her child, whom she suckled herself, and whom she never would trust a moment out of her arms. My brother Albert had a cottage in the wood, and her constant walks were either thither or to a little chapel at no great distance from the castle, and which Sir Reginald wishes you to visit to-day.

"Thus the time wore on, until the day came which brought news to blast all our hopes. We had been anticipating the day when the Lion-heart would return to England to see and to own a wife and a son worthy of the throne and of the royal lineage; for, oh! young men, such a mother!—so queenly, so noble, so dazlingly beautiful; and such a child!—such a young prince ne'er before awaited the return of an anxiously looked-for father and monarch. Alas! instead of himself, news came of his

death at Chalus. None of us dared tell the Lady Ada. Sir Reginald and Cavendish, we said, are both at the castle, they will break the news to her. But the knight and the Templar went out together early in the day, attended by their confidential servant, Mauners, without having asked an audience of her, or gone to her apartments; and she herself, poor lady! went out as usual with her child, and unattended.

"She was that day so much longer of returning than was her wont, that we began to be uneasy. By-and-by that uneasiness became alarm, when one of the servants, during the afternoon, came in saying that she had heard in the wood sounds of distress, and the cries as if of an infant. The greater part of the household immediately went out—the chief body in the direction where the girl said she had heard the cries—others by less frequented paths; I myself in the direction of the chapel.

"I was nearly within sight of that building, when I saw some one running toward me on the footpath. It was my brother Albert.

"Run for assistance, Jasper!" he called out, as soon as he saw me; 'run for help!—our lady is hanging on a tree hard by here.'

"I turned immediately, and ran in a state of great agitation hither and thither, ere I could meet with any of the straggling parties; when at last I collected a few together, and we proceeded to the path where I had left my brother. I found him trying to hold up the body of the lady, so as to prevent the napkin by which she was suspended to the tree doing farther damage; but his cares were evidently too late. The child was in her arms—its face turned on her bosom, as if it had given up its last breath there; and when they were cut down, it was evident that they had been for some time dead. We never separated the two. When one of the domestics tried to turn the stiffened arm of the mother, Albert said—

"Let them lie as we have found them. They were lovely in their lives, and in their death let them not be divided.'

"We supposed, poor lady! that the news of the death of the king, given her by some one whom she had met accidentally, had impelled her to the rash act. If—if—"

Here Jasper looked anxiously around, and toward the door. Adam got up, looked into the passage, and assured him that no one was within hearing.

"Draw close to me, young men—closer yet; let looks rather than words tell the conclusion of my fearful tale. There were the marks of violence—of hands—of fingers, on the necks both of the mother and of the child; they had been strangled before they were so suspended; and—and—Sir Reginald and Cavendish were in the woods with that one attendant that morning—and—and—my bosom is eased."

And the old man sank his head on his breast, and appeared for some time as if life had almost left him with these words. In a short

time, however, he resumed, in a tone of one relieved of a mental weight—

"Now, young men, you know what Sir Reginald sent you here to learn. You can not now doubt of the death of the Lady Ada; you can not now doubt of the death of her child—of that kingly child, whose every look, had he lived, would have sent daggers to bosoms which were a long time at rest, they said, but which seem now again inquiet—why, I know not. Conscience is a hard mistress when she is once aroused. The Lady Ada, from the circumstances attending her death, was refused Christian burial at Ault Hucknall. We buried her in the little chapel, with her child still at her bosom; and you will see to-day, above that grave, the figures of a queen and a royal infant sculptured in marble, which were found there one morning. No one ever knew from whence they came—no one ever attempted to remove them. On the contrary, the greatest care has been taken to spread the understanding that they have been erected by King John himself; and when you observe, young men, that there is a crown on the head of the lady, you will see something therein—at least so has it always appeared to me—which gives a strange key to the circumstances of the death of the Lady Ada happening on the very day that the knight and the Templar here received intelligence of the death of her—monarch.

"Now, young men, you must bid me good-day. You have staid here long enough. You seem intelligent and honest: be discreet also. Go your ways; and the good wishes of an old and dying man go with you."

Adam and Tom took leave of old Jasper with many expressions of thanks for the confidence he had reposed in them, and assurances that it would not be abused. They went below, by no means cheered by the story they had heard, nor did the castle take any less gloomy aspect to them after such a recital.

"I really wish, Adam," Maeduff said, "that we were fairly out o' this. I would be found hanging on a tree myself, ane o' these days, if I had often to listen to sic stories, in sic a place."

"Wheesht, Tam, wheesht! Dinna speak about hanging here—although there's some o' the chaps we ken that it's owre gude for. Keep a quick sough, as I often tell ye; we'll no be lang here—that's ae comfort."

They found Benson in the hall, who led them into the forest a short way through a wilder and more sombre path than they had yet trod.

"That's the tree these fools speak about," their conductor said. "If they had been in Normandy with me, when the fortune of war was constantly changing the proprietorship of the forest, they would have been so accustomed to see fruit of that sort hanging from the trees, that they would not make such a fuss about a woman. Nothing like war for curing people of fancies and fine feelings."

Adam and Tom had not yet been at the

wars, so they could not get quit of certain disagreeable feelings as they passed under the tree: nor could they divest themselves of a very superstitious kind of awe, as they regarded the monument in the chapel, and thought of who were lying under it. The tomb was of extreme simplicity, having merely the figures of a lady and child at full length, laid, as if asleep, on a slab of white marble; the slab and figures being formed out of the same block. The female figure, as Jasper said, had a crown on her head, of the same form as those then worn by queens; which the taste of those who preserve the tomb until this day, in Scarcliffe Church, on the confines of Sherwood Forest, carefully gild, as often as the interior of the church is cleaned or painted. It is a singular thing to find a monument of such beauty alone, and detached from every other type of sepulture, in such a retired corner. It is the only memorial now remaining of the deeds of darkness which once gave such an unenviable celebrity to the hunting-seat of Sherwood Forest.

It was approaching the dinner hour when Tom and Adam returned to the castle. The evening was spent, partly in the hall, and partly in undergoing some cross-questioning up stairs on the subject of Jasper's information, which they stood wonderfully well.

They retired to bed early; but they were some time in falling asleep, not being able to resist talking of the strangeness of their situation—of the dread events which had been recounted to them, and of the singular commission with which they expected to be charged.

At what time of the night it happened, Adam could not afterward say, but he was awake by some one touching him gently. Looking up, he beheld with amazement a female, whom he recognized at once as the lady who had spoken to him at Sheffield, standing at the bedside, and holding in her hand a small lantern. She was clothed in white, and had a white veil thrown over her, which descended to her feet. Making signs to Adam to rise and follow her in silence, she approached the arras at the farther end of the room, raised it, and opened a small door through which she passed, lowering the arras and shutting it noiselessly, when Adam also was at the other side. Renewing her sign to him to maintain silence and walk softly, she led the way through a long, narrow gallery, and stopped at a point where voices were distinctly heard in an adjoining chamber, as if in altercation.

"How often must I repeat to thee, Cavendish," Taunton was overheard saying, "that it was perfectly possible for the Lady Ada to have had the child of some cottager in her arms, while her own was perhaps asleep. Mauners soon silenced the cries of the brat, but he never took it out of the arms of the queen."

"*Thou art fond of strong expressions, Taunton, this evening,*" Cavendish replied; "*that title would require a little more evidence to support it than has yet been produced.*"

"It is safer, Cavendish, for us to take the view I now do, even if I appear to thee somewhat too credulous. Besides, I tell thee—the image of that woman I have seen at Durham and Sheffield haunts me. We never had the death of the Lady Zillah properly authenticated, and if that be her, as I fear it is, she may do us much harm."

"Pooh, Taunton! thou art really become an old woman with thy suspicions and fear. Mauners could not be mistaken in respect to the bodies found in the Wye."

"There, Cavendish," Taunton called out triumphantly, "thou art in the same dilemma into which thou desiredst to place us. Thou didst mock us for believing the evidence of a surgeon, because the state of decomposition was so great; and yet thou takest the evidence of one who hath no skill in such matters, regarding bodies which must have been at least two months under water."

"I see no analogy between the two cases," Cavendish replied; "but come, let us go from suppositions to realities. What is it thou meanest in reality to do with those two Scotch curs? I protest, for my part, against any confidential matter being put into their hands; they are too cunning by half—the older one at least."

"Thou dost not think," Taunton said, "that I never meant to employ them as I make them believe? No; I have allowed them to glean all the information they can here, in the first place. To-morrow morning I shut them up—not in Stephen's Tower, from which that idiot Blondel enabled the Lady Jean to escape—but in Flintoff's, from which no one has ever yet fled, and where every word they utter will be heard. They can not fail to talk to each other, and will, I expect, let out some information of great use to us. When I think there is no more to be obtained in that manner—there are some implements in that tower we have found of use before, and a good gibbet to finish with."

The two cavaliers manifested no diversity of opinion on this point, for they laughed heartily and in concert; but one of the listeners behind the wainscoat began to think with trembling, that Macduff had been the wiser of the two, when he proposed escaping on the banks of the Tees.

This amiable conference was broken up by Taunton calling for Benson, and ordering him to bolt noiselessly, on the outside, the door of the bedroom of the two Scotchmen. Adam followed the lady, who advanced along the passage to the top of a narrow winding staircase, which they descended. At the bottom they entered a vaulted passage of great length; and on ascending from it by a few narrow steps, the lady touched a spring, and a marble slab opening before them, disclosed the chapel, with the monumental figures.

"It is well," Adam's conductress said, as they stepped into the chapel, "that I called thee forth this night, for, by what thou hast overheard, a few hours later and I could have

yielded thee no assistance. Thou and thy companion must not linger here; with the morning dawn—for in the obscurity of the night ye could not find the path in the forest—haste ye hither, and from hence to the cottage, as I directed thee, where ye will find horses awaiting you. Take not the same road by which ye came to Sherwood. Inquire for the Peveril way, which leads to the banks of the Derwent, and take the road over the hills to Warrington. Remain at Warrington all night. Take next day the route to Skipton. I have put it here on parchment, lest ye forget the names. On arriving at Skipton, let thy companion remain in the hostelry, and go thou alone to inquire for Thomas the Armorer. Tell him that the knight of Sedbergh desireth him to direct thee to the hermit. Follow his directions; but go alone, and let thy companion rest solitary in his chamber, unseen by any one, until thy return. I will not retain thee longer at present, for thou wilt have need of rest. Thy journey to-morrow will be long and fatiguing. Return to thy chamber by the way thou camest."

As the lady spoke, Adam looked alternately at her and at the figure sculptured in marble lying before him. The likeness was so strong, that he fain would have asked some questions; but the manner and appearance of his conductress was so noble and majestic, and her voice, though sweet, so commanding in its tones, that the words he tried to utter fled away on his tongue. Besides, she was evidently anxious for his departure; so, after respectfully bending to kiss the hand she held out to him, he turned again into the passage, the marble slab was instantly shut, and he was left in darkness, save the few rays of light from the lamp, which stole through crevices in the wall. He was groping his way down the steps, when those few rays were suddenly extinguished, and he heard at the same moment the noise as of a number of persons approaching the chapel. The sound drew nearer and nearer, and the voice of the Templar was heard demanding the key of the chapel. The answers showed that they were the domestics from the castle who accompanied him. No one had the key—no one had thought of it.

"Force open the door, then," Cavendish said. "These tricks must be exposed, else there will be no living in the castle."

Adam heard the door give way, a sharp blow instantly following, and the voice of his conductress exclaiming—

"Die, murderer, in thy sins! It is the Lady Ada deals the blow!" and a heavy body fell over the tomb of the mother and child.

Screams rose from the domestics, who, in their fright, dropped the torches they carried, and ran in wild confusion to the castle. They had seen, as they thought, the marble statue rise and plunge a dagger into the heart of Cavendish, and some of them left not their beds again for weeks. Even Benson was forced to own that there were things beyond his com-

prehension; and he attempted no answer when Elgitha alleged, that those who did not go out of the world in a natural way might have ways of coming in again which were not open to others.

Adam groped his way back to the room where Tom lay sound, dreaming of ghosts perhaps, but seeing none, and attempted in vain to sleep. He rose with the peep of dawn and awoke Macduff, telling him enough to quicken his preparations for departure, without rousing his superstitious fears. As they passed the room where Adam overheard the conversation during the night, they heard the voice of some one say—

"Go, call Sir Reginald and the Templar; I must speak to them instantly."

"I may call Sir Reginald," Benson replied; "but the Templar will never again obey thy call or mine. He is laid out in the hall below."

"Laid out—what mean you, Benson?"

"He was slain by the statue in the chapel during the night."

"Fool! but I must not lose my time in idle talk. Go, call Sir Reginald."

Adam made a sign to Tom that they had better remain a moment. In a short time they heard Sir Reginald Taunton enter.

"Mauners," he said, "what meaneth this? What bringeth thee at such a time? I thought thou hadst been in Scotland."

"I was there," Mauners replied; "Glenorchy is slain, and I have escaped with my life. The Lady Jean is in Scotland, and is accompanied by—"

There was a pause of a moment.

"By whom?" Sir Reginald demanded impatiently.

"By the child," Mauners answered, in a hoarse voice, "grown to be a man, and a valiant one, for he it is who hath slain the knight of Glenorchy. I had attempted, before Glenorchy came, to do for him; but that fool Blondel, born, I think, to frustrate all our plans, came stealthily behind me, ere the knife had done its work."

Another pause followed. It was broken by Mauners inquiring of Sir Reginald what he proposed doing.

"Instantly setting off to the king; thou must follow without delay, as we shall both have, I suppose, to go incontinent to Scotland. But I must first put two Scotch curs I have here to the torture: we may gain much valuable information from them."

Adam made a sign to Tom that they must delay no longer. On reaching the chapel, Macduff surveyed with great terror the blood which stained the marble figures, and was bespattered over the floor; but neither spoke a word. They hastened on to the cottage—found the two horses in a shed behind, and hidden by the trees; mounted them and rode off in the direction the lady had intimated.

At the castle, Sir Reginald and Mauners &

ascended to the hall, where lay the body of the Templar.

"What means this story," Mauners asked, "which Benson tells me of the statue slaying Cavendish?"

"It was only yester even," Sir Reginald replied, "that I endeavored in vain to convince Cavendish that the bodies thou hadst seen taken out of the Wye, were not those of the Lady Zillah and her child. He has now received the punishment of his incredulity."

Sir Reginald and Mauners started back—the pall above the body of Cavendish had moved! They smiled contemptuously at each other, as they saw the Templar's large and faithful hound slip out from beneath it.

"He was so obstinate," Sir Reginald observed bitterly, "that I expected he was about to rise and contradict me, even although I have no doubt whatever that it was the dagger of the Lady Zillah which dealt him the deadly blow. I am sorry he hath met a death so upworthy of a soldier; but, in truth, Mauners, I am not much grieved to be quit of him. He began to be troublesome with his opinionative incredulity."

Benson here entered to say that, on opening the door of the chamber of the Scotchmen, it was found empty. The birds had flown; but there were no traces—no clew to the manner of their escape.

"There is treachery somewhere!" Sir Reginald exclaimed; "order my fleetest horse—quick! Benson. Thou requirest rest, Mauners—remain here. I hope to overtake these two spies, and bring them soon back here, dead or alive. If I return not during the day, come thou to-morrow to Durham."

Sir Reginald went out, and soon his horse's hoofs were heard clattering across the court. Mauners sat surveying the body of the Templar, and was in the act of lifting the end of the pall which covered the countenance, when he leaped back, horror in every feature, and every limb convulsed with terror. Cavendish rose up before him—ghastly pale, and covered with blood!

"That supple minion of a weak master thought me dead, Mauners; and, in truth, I was nearly so—it was an ugly blow. But call Benson, and order our horses. No reply, Mauners. Benson knoweth that I am still alive. I must wash off these stains, and then to horse. Of Reginald and I, one returneth not alive to Sherwood this day."

A short time afterward, Mauners and Cavendish left the castle; the fright of the domestics not being greater at beholding the Templar alive, than their astonishment at seeing Mauners in the accoutrements and trappings of a knight.

CHAPTER XV.

INGLEBOROUGH.

"We are better off this time than when we got out o' the gled's-grupe—we have got the

cool o' the morning and twa good naigs," Tom remarked to Adam, as they rode briskly through the forest.

"Ay, it's mair agreeable," Adam replied; "only, a wide country and a dark night have some advantages owre narrow paths and thick covers, that a toad could hardly get through. Our only chance is, that they that hunt us mayna tak' the same turns. There's Hardwicke on the left there, I think, frae what the lady said. It's a snug-looking place, though melancholy—as if it were mourning owre the twa bonnie birds that thae crowned heads herried out o' their cozie nest there. But I maun tell you a' about that some ither time, Tam; we maunna claver, wi' a gallows-tree behind us, and a lang day's journey before us."

So on they sped, after leaving Sherwood Forest, through scenes which have since furnished subjects for many pencils and many pens, and which since, too, have been well trodden by the feet of many pilgrims in search of health, pleasure, and the picturesque. Tom was particularly taken with the rocky tors and natural towers of Matlock, which, he declared, greatly resembled Craig-Vinean in a seething-pot, and "mair than half melted." It was the dark and lonely tower of Chatsworth—the type of the times in which it existed, as its gaudy successor is of a lighter and gayer age—which chiefly interested Adam; and he became so involved in reflections on the story they had heard connected with it, that they had passed the holy well and cross, and little chapel, which then marked the spot on which brilliant Buxton was afterward to boast of its crowded crescent and fashionable fountains, and were in the very heart of the desolate scenery of the Peak, ere Adam was awoke out of his reverie by Macduff remarking, that he had seen many wild scenes in Scotland, and had even been "stormsted" on the Lammermoor, but that any place so utterly "forgotten by its Maker and forsaken by man," as he termed it, he never had before met with.

It was late ere they arrived at Warrington, even then celebrated for its religious houses and good hostleries. In the yard of one of the latter the two tired young men were right glad to dismount, and after seeing their horses provided for, to take their place in a comfortable kitchen, not far from a blazing and most welcome fire. As they were crossing the yard from the stable to the kitchen, a friar arrived, who also seemed to have come off a long journey, to judge by the state of his steed, which, Macduff said, as far as they could see by the light from the house, was fitter for a huntsman than a friar. The latter entered the kitchen after them, and took his seat in a corner near the door, where he remained counting his beads, with his cowl drawn over his head, and was in the same position and employment when Adam and Tom retired for the night. They found him so engaged next day on descending, as if he had never moved from the spot, and was in the performance of some vow.

Their journey from Warrington to Skipton was through a country very varied in its aspect, but generally wild and mountainous. If any seer, "rapt into future years," could have told them that the very wildest and most remote of these valleys would become part of one vast manufacturing emporium—every rill, not to mention rivers and rivulets, doing more work in one day than the fingers of the most industrious matron could turn out with her spindle or spinning-wheel in a year—that mills would spring up instead of castles, and cotton lords take the wall of Cavendishes and Tauntons, they would have judged the impostor fit for the darkest cell and the highest gibbet in the castle of Sherwood.

The day was well advanced as they entered the little town of Skipton, which lay nestling under the walls of the castle of the same name. After hiring a room for a day in one of the little inns, which Tom installed himself in, under the plea to the landlady of fatigue and indisposition, and arranging with her for a fresh horse, Adam went out on the mission with which he was specially charged.

In the square in front of the castle, the situation of which, so open, so airy, and commanding a view unparalleled perhaps in England for extent, richness, and variety—a situation contrasting so remarkably with the château of Sherwood Forest; in that square he was not long of finding out the shop of Thomas the Armorer. As he entered it, he observed a monk, resembling very much the friar he had seen at Warrington, but stooping apparently with age and infirmity, approaching the house at the same time: and while he stepped into the workshop where the forge was blazing, and where the workmen were clattering with their hammers, the friar remained at the door, clinging for support, as it seemed, to the heavy wooden doorposts, and in the attitude of asking for alms.

On Adam inquiring for Thomas the Armorer, a man well advanced in years, but still hale, hearty, and strong, laid down the large fore-hammer which he was handling, and advanced to the doorway.

"What is it you desire of Thomas the Armorer?" he asked.

"The knight of Sedbergh has desired me to ask of him the address of the hermit," Adam replied.

"I am at all times ready to comply with the wishes of the knight of Sedbergh; but as you seem just off a journey, if you can rest a short time, you had better enter and take some refreshments ere setting out on such an expedition."

Adam excused himself on account of the late hour, and his wish to return to Skipton that evening. The armorer shook his head, and said—

"I fear, young man, you can not make good your intention in regard to returning to Skipton; but if you can return even so far as Ingleton, whatever the hour may be, do not scruple to arouse my son there of the same name; his

house will be at your service on giving him the same watchword. If you are intent on seeing the hermit without delay, on leaving Skipton, you will take the road which leads along the Craven country, to the westward from hence, almost the whole way at the foot of the ledge of rocks, which look more like a rocky coast than the border of a fertile valley. On arriving at Ingleton, where you may leave your horse in charge of my son, you turn off that line of road by a mountain-path on the right, which conducts you up a gorge on the side of lofty Ingleborough; keep on that path until you arrive at where the path turns suddenly to the right, directly at the base of the *pass* of Ingleborough. There stop; and, with one of the stones that you will find in abundance around, strike three times firmly and loudly on the gray rock which stands at the turn of the path. The hermit will reply to your summons a few minutes afterward. I need not give you any further directions—the name of the knight of Sedbergh will suffice for every thing there."

Adam thanked his informant, and turned so abruptly that he almost overthrew the monk, who leaned against the doorposts. The mendicant hobbled quickly off, however, considering his apparent age; and Adam, after bidding Tom good-by, mounted his horse, and rode off in the direction the armorer had indicated, through the valley which lies between the three mountains, of which the popular rhyme, even then, ran—

Pen-y-Gant, Penthill, and little Ingleborough,
You'll not find three such hills
If ye seek all England thorough.

For some time the strange events he had lately witnessed so occupied his mind, that he scarcely regarded the singular country through which he passed. By degrees, however, these reflections gave way to a feeling of admiration, mingled with surprise, at the extraordinary nature of the scenery around him. On the one hand, a rich pastoral country—on the other, a wall of rock rising abruptly out of the plain, in the most grotesque and picturesque forms—often shooting up to a great height, and as often again sinking almost to a level with the plain, yet never wholly lost to view. This was not for one mile, but many; and ever, as he advanced, the forms of the rocks became more and more singular, varied, and fantastic.

He was beginning almost to forget the horrors of Sherwood, in the natural beauties around him, when a circumstance occurred, which tended to revive some of his disagreeable half-superstitious feelings. He had dismounted at a steep part of the road, near what seemed to be a fountain or well; but, on approaching it, there was not a drop of water in the basin. He felt very thirsty, and could not avoid murmuring on his horse's account, as well his own—

"I wish some kind fairy would fill this pretty cup for us."

When instantly the water began to flow, and in a few minutes the cup was running over. At

first he was in such trepidation and alarm, that he hesitated about tasting the water; this feeling wore off, however, and when he had drank, and found it cool, refreshing, and good, he began to reflect on having heard of ebbing and flowing wells. Still the circumstance brought back his former train of gloomy thoughts and superstitions; and when he distinguished, by-and-by, more distinctly, what he imagined he had heard more than once before—the sound of horses' hoofs, going when he went, and stopping when he stopped, he was more than prepared to regard it as something supernatural. The frequent repetition of the sound, however, convinced him at last that it was only the echo of the hoofs of his own steed rebounding from the rocky wall; and he became so accustomed to it that, toward the end of his journey, he amused himself by putting it frequently to the test.

On arriving at Ingleton, he put up his horse as directed, and, after ascending the steep path which wound along the projecting ledges of the lower strata of the mountain, by the side of a clear and rapid mountain river, he gained a kind of half-grassy, half-heathy valley or gorge of the mountain, of no great width, but stretching northward, and skirting the huge bulk of Ingleborough, far as the eye could reach. There was nothing to vary the monotony of its surface, save groups of stones or rocks of most fantastic forms, and natural walls of gray rock of most varied clothing; and these were so singular in their position, that if he had been a geologist—a sect of philosophers then unknown, in Scotland at least—he would never have enjoyed a night's rest, until he had gone to one of the highest eminences of the range of those hills, and taken a bird's-eye view of one of the most interesting scenes to a naturalist that are to be witnessed in England—only a very small portion of which was visible to our traveler. To sketch it, however, with any degree of correctness, it is necessary that we leave Adam, and go with the geologist to some lofty point which commands, at least, one of the valleys comprised in the map of the northwestern district of Yorkshire.

From such a point, it will be seen that, from the basin of the Ouse, there rise toward the west several ranges of hills, formed of layers of rock perfectly horizontal, from the moment they begin to appear in the valleys, until the last layer is placed on the top of Ingleborough—over a part of which the path which Adam pursued lay. These layers, or strata, seldom reach twenty feet in thickness, and do not, in many places, exceed five or six. In the valleys, where they are laid bare by rivers or rivulets, cascades of the most uncommon and artificial appearance are produced, seeming to be the works of the Titans or giants of the earth, rather than natural phenomena. Many of these rivulets have hollowed out passages to a great depth under the surface of the ground, producing subterranean water-falls; and the sides of the valleys above present similar appearances on a

larger scale, being formed as if the mountains had been broken asunder by some convulsion, or hollowed out by the torrents of the deluge. They present on each side appearances almost identical—the same strata, the same terraces, the same color of the rocks, or, to designate them more correctly, the rocky walls, monuments, and terraces, with almost the same fantastic and beautiful sprinkling, on both hands, of brushwood and evergreens. Add to this, that there are no trees in the higher districts, and that the whole extent of the higher valleys is divided, and probably from the earliest times was divided, by dry stone walls, separating fields and properties—each field having a stone building in it to shelter the flocks in winter, and to preserve the hay; and imagination can not form to itself a more striking picture of a city which has been torn asunder by a convulsion of the earth, and its walls and habitations spread over the sides of the receding mountains.

The part of this extraordinary district which Adam traversed differed from the larger valleys, which we have now endeavored to describe, only in this respect, that there were no signs of habitations, no traces of walls, save those formed by the monotonous and equal layers of rocks; wildness and desolation reigned around, and it was with rather an uneasy feeling that Adam observed the sun sink behind the eminences on the left, although it still continued to gild the rocky terraces of Ingleborough, under which his path lay. Looking back, too, a scene met his view as unexpected as it was beautiful. Far, far beyond, and far far below the wild gorge he was traversing, the rich and lovely valley of the Lune opened out toward the pebbly shore of Morecamb bay; and from the spot where he stood, the dark towers of Lancaster Castle—famed even before John o' Gaunt lent them the terror of his name—rose stately, and formed a prominent object in the distant landscape. Soon, however, this distance, rendered so rich by the declining sun, and so beautiful by contrast with the wild foreground, was lost to his view; and anon he found himself alone in a dread wilderness, desolation around him, and silence on every side, broken only by the melancholy moan of distant waters.

It was then he first began to ask himself what had become of the little river which came leaping down the rocks he had at first ascended on leaving Ingleton. It was evident that it was only through that valley it could flow, yet of it there were now no traces; and at one of the pauses he made to look around him, he thought he heard the sound, as if nearer than at first, as of a river bounding over the rocks—yet of water there was not even a mountain-rivulet within sight to relieve the wearied eye. At one of these pauses, also, he thought he heard footsteps, which stopped—as the sound of horses' hoofs had ceased on the road from Skipton—as he himself paused, and again he attributed the sound to the reverberation from the perpendicular walls of rocks.

Again he stopped. There could be no mistake this time; he was certain he heard footsteps, which could not be the reverberation of his own; and he had turned so quickly, that the individual, whose vicinity they denoted, had not time as before to shrink behind one of the edges of rock at a short distance on the right. In that individual Adam recognized the old monk who had rested so close to him at the loorway of Thomas the Armorer.

His amazement at discovering so near him a decrepit old man—who seemed scarcely able to cross the square at Skipton, and yet who had come such a distance—was soon forgotten in the very uncomfortable feeling of having been followed and watched; and no doubt now remained on his mind that the friar of Warrington and the monk of Skipton were one and the same. He called out in the direction of the rocks where the monk had disappeared, but received no answer; he went toward the rocks and examined all their recesses, but not a living creature was to be seen. He hesitated for some time whether he should proceed or not; but it occurred to him that this was perhaps the hermit himself, and that probably he was not far from the stone where he was to call upon him. This explanation of the mystery—which he was the more ready to adopt at a period of the world when rapid transition, and the ready adoption of any change of form, were supposed to be the peculiar province, and at all times within the power of those who devoted themselves to lives of seclusion and mystic study—while it removed his fears of having been watched, added to the dreariness of the scene, in imparting feelings of indescribable awe, from which hitherto he had been wonderfully free—feelings which were increased by now hearing more distinctly the moan of waters, although none were visible in any direction.

In this state of mind he began again to move forward, and ere long he discovered that his expectations of soon attaining the indicated rock had been well-founded—for, at a short distance from where he had seen the wraith of the old monk, as he began to think it must have been, or the hermit, the path turned suddenly on either hand, and a huge gray rock, which had fallen in some remote age from the body of the mountain, stood at one of the corners of the cross paths, hoary with the showers of centuries, and picturesque with the mossy tresses which protruded from its thousand crevices.

The hollow of the hill in which he stood was now beginning so rapidly to assume the dull hue of evening, that he hesitated not a moment in taking up one of the many stones lying round, and striking thrice on the rock. At every blow, the natural terraces around sent back dismal and prolonged echoes. Ere the last had died away over the hill, he saw with astonishment, instead of a hermit, a lady come from behind one of the rocks at the bottom of the hollow, and advance toward him. She was old, but the form was that of his visitor of

the preceding evening; and when she spoke, he trembled all over at the sound of the voice, which there was now no doubt was hers.

"I am glad to see that thou hast made good thy flight, and to find thee so punctual, young man," she said; "I only regret that the day is so far advanced that it will be impossible for thee to return to thy companion. Follow me, however, for thou must be fatigued with thy journey."

Adam was hesitating whether he should tell her of having seen the hermit, as he supposed, by the way, when the old monk himself, at least the figure he had seen resembling him, rushed out from behind the rock, exclaiming—

"Traitorous Scot! take this, the promised reward of thy treachery!" and the arm of Sir Reginald Taunton was descending with too true an aim on the breast of his destined victim, when it was arrested by the lady, who, however, received the blow, although not in all its force, on the other arm, from which the blood streamed forth on her own garments, and on those of the seeming monk.

She neither fainted nor fell; and ere Sir Reginald could recover from the impetus with which he had thrown himself forward to inflict the blow, she seized the arm of Adam, and hurried him toward the lower part of the hollow. Observing, however, that the friar was close upon them, she, with a force which in a woman seemed almost superhuman, threw Adam suddenly over, turned round, caught in her grasp the disguised knight, and sunk with him into the ground.

A mingled shriek and horrid groan burst, as it seemed, from the bowels of the earth, which made all the rocky terraces of Ingleborough ring again, and froze the blood of the terrified young man even to his very heart's core.

Adam's fortitude and philosophy were now fairly overtaken, and if he did not absolutely faint, he lay for some time in a state of stupor bordering upon it, hoping, if not believing, all that had passed to be but a troubled dream. Out of this state he was roused by the lady appearing again before him, a napkin wrapped around her arm to stanch the flowing of the blood from the wound.

"All danger from that dreaded man is now past," she said; "rise, and follow me."

Adam arose accordingly, and followed her—still in a state of mind any thing rather than calm or collected. She led the way round one of the detached masses of rock, with which the country was all along studded, and then entering a wide fissure, not observable from the pathway by which Adam had come along the valley, she conducted him by a steep descent to a scene, which replaced his late feelings of horror by those of amazement.

The river, which he had looked for in vain above ground, here found a passage through the rocks below, over the regular terraces of which—the strata under ground, as well as those above, being horizontal—the waters poured in

a cascade, or rather cataract, the grandeur of which even the regularity of the rocks could not detract from. Above, the rocks approached each other so closely, that even at mid-day the light stole feebly down into the murky cavern, now lit up by a large fire, which threw its flickering gleams around, and imparted a supernatural and tartarean aspect to the vaulted abode. It was an abode, for, by the side of the fire sat an old man, who was surrounded by some humble articles of furniture, while, in the recesses of the rock, could be discerned more than one couch formed of the skins of the wild animals of the district.

When Adam had attentively considered and surveyed all around him, his conductress, who had been communicating by signs with the old man, now approached him, and said—

“My young friend, it is well that thou hast been followed and watched by that man, who, but a short half hour since, might have done thee, and many more, much evil. His own rashness has drawn down a just doom on his guilty head. Seest thou that pathway by which we have just descended? One step aside from the projection of that rock above ground, and instant destruction awaits, as thou mayest observe, the rash intruder into this abode. Seeing that the approach of that cruel persecutor prevented me hurrying thee into this place of safety, I threw thee rudely aside to save thy life, and Reginald Taunton, who hath drawn so many into his toils, took, in the eagerness of pursuit, that one false step which sent him lifeless into the boiling caldron below, while I stood firm on the dangerous-looking but secure pathway.

Adam shuddered as he surveyed the narrow boundary between life and a fearful and sudden death; and as his gaze turned from it and rested on the female form which he had seen sculptured in marble on the tomb the day before, now animated and excited by a triumph as complete as it was rapid and bold in conception, and terrific in execution, and from her again glancing around on all the dread accessories of the extraordinary scene, he would have doubted its reality, but for those habits of calm reasoning which he possessed naturally, and which had been strengthened under the tuition of a very sensible mother, one of whose often-repeated aphorisms was, that “a wise man’s eyes are in his head”—a remark, as Adam frequently said, not altogether new, but not on that account the less true. All the aphorisms and maxims in the world could not, however, prevent him being both a little agitated and stunned by such a train of stirring and extraordinary events; nor could he altogether hide his emotion from the lady, who, taking him by the hand, led him to the table, at which he seated himself, and where she proffered him some restoratives, saying—

“*I am not surprised at thine agitation, young man, considering the strange scenes thou hast witnessed; on the contrary, I am astonished*

that thou hast so well preserved thy calmness and presence of mind. Thou wilt feel still more reassured when I have informed thee of circumstances, unknown to good old Jasper, but which are in part known by his brother, Albert, here, now quite deaf; not so much from age, as from being constantly exposed to the noise of this cataract, and to the moisture of his rude dwelling.

“Jasper will have told thee that I, Ada, continued to live at Hardwicke, on the borders of Sherwood Forest; while my sister, Zillah, went to the dreary fortress of Baslow, or Chatsworth, not far from the wild country of the Peverils. This was after our marriage with the two princes, of which Albert there was witness. I intrusted this packet to thy charge, which I dared not carry with me to Sherwood. Thou wilt open and read it in the presence of thy master, the knight of Moredun, when I shall have left these shores. Suffice it at present, that my sister Zillah—to avoid the hateful importunities of the detested Cavendish, placed, as I do believe, by Prince John, as her keeper for that special purpose—fled from Baslow; and after suffering, which it would only distress me to relate, and thee to hear, she found refuge in this cavern, where she gave birth to a daughter, and where she lived with her for some months afterward.

“The dreariness of her situation here tempted her to seek, in disguise, the neighborhood of Hardwicke, where she had left me. Finding that I had been removed to Sherwood, she sought out the cottage of Albert, where she remained undiscovered, owing to a scheme which we adopted, but which led to consequences so frightful, that even yet I can not speak of them with composure—hardened as every womanly feeling in my mind has become, by what I have witnessed, and by that thirst of vengeance which yet lacks one victim ere it be satiated.”

Adam shaded his eyes with his hand, as if from the light, but in reality to shut out from his view the looks of the Lady Ada, which it was now fearful to contemplate. She proceeded thus—

“I visited the cottage of Albert daily with my child. Thither I took a change of raiment, similar to my own, in which dress my sister enjoyed daily excursions through the wood with her infant, while I remained in the cottage. You have been told how close we resembled each other. No one of all the household suspected that there were more than one mother, and one child; Albert alone knew.

“One day that my sister had thus gone out with her child, Albert rushed into the cottage and said in great agitation and alarm—

“Fly, Lady Ada, fly with thy child! Reginald and Cavendish have slain thy sister and her infant, thinking it to be thee. News had arrived of the death of King Richard, and the existence and that of thy child is at an end, if they discover the error they have committed. Fly to the cave in Ingleborough, where thy sister found refuge; I will join thee there.”

as I can leave this place without exciting suspicion.

To describe the state of mind in which I am receiving this harrowing intelligence, how it was that, in such a state of distraction in the disguise of a mendicant, I reached this place, would be impossible. I believe I have been for a time insane, and that, as I received doubly the commiseration and assistance of the cottagers as I prosecuted my long and wearisome journey. To that faithful sure there I owed my escape, no less by warning and the means afforded me than by hiding in hiding from the murderers the way they had made in their choice of victims. I have reason to believe, however, that suspicion was some mistake in regard to the child had been, which led to the exhumation of the bones, and to a search which hitherto hath been fruitless.

By Albert's advice and aid, after residing for some considerable time with my child, I am now under the charge of one with whom I entered into a league against the three murderers. In the matters regarding that league, I am bound to silence; but that is at present of little moment. Besides, I see sleep stealing from mine eyelids; and thou hast need of rest, thou must be astir early. Thy companion will be uneasy at thine absence, and thou hast a long journey before thee to-morrow. In that case thou wilt find a huntsman's couch."

Adam was well content to take the Lady's hint; and in spite of what he had witnessed and heard, as well as the extraordinary place he was in, he soon fell into a sound and refreshing slumber.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STRID.

Next morning, Adam was awoken by the Lady at a very early hour, and hastened into the great cavern. Although only straggling rays of the morning light found their way there, they were yet sufficient to show its general outline, and to present it more in a picturesque point of view, than as the abode of witchcraft and evil character which it assumed the previous evening to Adam's excited imagination. There were features of it, also, which were not visible before; for, besides the torrent which rolled over the regular terraces of the horizontal rocks, whirled into the boiling caldron at the feet of the spectator, farther up the ravine the whole of the water came down in one mass from a crevice of the rock near the surface; and from this basin into which it fell there arose a mist, which had hid the waterfall on the previous evening, but which, on the elastic morning air, rolled itself into spiral wreaths, through the openings of which the cataract was visible, and when, on reaching the narrow opening above, descended into lustrous and ever-varying rain-

bows. If, by the light of the evening fire, the spacious cavern seemed a proper chamber for witchery and deeds of darkness, in the morning beams it appeared a fit abode for the fairies—a beautiful retreat for Queen Titania and all her train.

The Scotchman was glad to gaze on it as a soother to his still somewhat over-heated and agitated mind; but his reverie was soon interrupted, although by no means disagreeably, by a figure which might almost have been mistaken for the Queen of the Fairies herself, so light was it—so gentle and so lovely—as it tripped out of one of the recesses in the rock with a basket, out of which it took the materials of what had very much the aspect of a good breakfast, and disposed them on a clean napkin spread over the table, at which old Albert had sat the previous evening. Adam had time to look at her while so occupied, and any thing so exquisitely beautiful he never before had witnessed. When asked afterward to describe her appearance, he replied, with a gallantry which his interlocutor scarcely anticipated from his staid and stoical manner—"She was so full in form and so beautiful in face, that she must have been a woman; but she was so spiritual—so light of foot and so graceful in every movement—that she must have fallen from the skies into the cavern, without having touched the dull earth in her transit."

This creature, whose loveliness made so deep an impression on the son of the armorer, signified, as she withdrew, by one of those attitudes and graceful motions which he afterward so poetically described, that breakfast was ready, and Adam did justice to it in a style which showed that he at least was no mere spiritual or starry visitant. As he was finishing the repast, the Lady Ada appeared, and conducted him, by the path he had descended the previous evening, to the world above.

"I hasten, discourteously perhaps, thy departure," she said, "as I fear thy companion may be alarmed should thy absence be prolonged. I wish thee, also, to pursue a different path on thy return. It matters not in regard to thy steed; the parent of the lady thou hast seen this morning—who is herself too noble to disdain the humblest services for those who aid her friends—has agents every where in this country, and thou wilt find that the name of the knight of Sedbergh will be a passport to thee wherever I direct thee to go. Keep on this path to the left, instead of that by which thou camest yesterday. At the first village, where small masses of gray rock, scattered all over the fields, have given it the name of Graystones, engage, in the name I have given thee, one of the small horses of the country: they are sure-footed, and will carry thee swiftly and securely through another gorge of this mountain, into the valley through which thou didst journey yesterday. On reaching the first wick or village, there exchange the small unshod steed for one better suited to the level road;

and, on arriving at Skipton, again seek out Thomas the Armorer. He will tell thee how to direct thy steps. There are many temptations for thee to go direct to Scotland; but I believe it will be well to go first to Durham. The providence which hath hitherto guarded thee, still continue to watch over thy path, and the blessings of an anxious mother be with thee!"

She disappeared behind the rock, and Adam went on his way, if not quite so gayly as he would have done over his own native heather, in many respects relieved from the uncertainty and fears with which he had been beset in the journey from Skipton. There was no mistaking the village to which he had been directed, where the gray stones, in their grouping, gave considerable countenance to the current tradition that they had dropped from the devil's apron, as he was on his way to build a bridge at Giggleswick. The same tradition added, that every day his satanic majesty came to try to lift those stones; but, fatigued with his useless toil, he went regularly to drink dry the well at which Adam had stopped the day before.

It was early in the forenoon when he bid good-day again to the armorer in his smithy. On being shown into a little parlor, he not only found refreshments awaiting him, but his friend Tom Macduff, who, alarmed by his non-appearance the previous evening, had made a morning call on the armorer to inquire if there were any news of him. Their meeting was a very cordial one; but ere Adam could give his friend any recital of the extraordinary things which he had witnessed, the armorer came in, and taking the young men by the hand, said—

"It paineth me much to have the appearance of wishing you out of my humble dwelling, the more especially as one of you is, as the other hath told me, the son of a craftsman of like occupation with myself; but I have learned this morning, from visitors to my workshop, that Sir William Cavendish, to whom the castle here belongs, hath suddenly arrived from the south. It is known, too, that he is in pursuit of two whom he designates as Scottish spies, and, I fear, if ye delay longer here, ye may be brought into trouble: I am even afraid that your intention of going from hence to Harewood, in order to regain your former route, can not be persevered in without danger."

"But how can this be?—there maun be some mistake," Adam interposed; "when we escaped frae Sherwood, the Templar, Cavendish, was understood to hae received his death-wound in a very extraordinary manner."

"I have told you the report," the armorer said, "exactly as I heard it—and from a quarter, too, not likely to be mistaken. At all events, it is safer for you to take it as true."

"Hear, then," he added, "what I have to propose. There are two good cross-bows for you of my making; I can warrant their strength

and just aim. Take them as gifts from the Lady Anne of Sedbergh, not from Thomas the Armorer; they are of price, and would not disgrace even high-born knights. Along with them, put on each of you one of those tunics and leathern cuirasses worn by the English cross-bowmen: so appareled, your passage, not alone in the neighborhood of Skipton, but through the other parts of England through which ye will have to pass, will be rendered easier for you—provided, above all, pardon me, if ye speak, as seldom as may be, to those whom ye do not know to be friends, or even to one another by the way while in this neighborhood. More than this, I wish ye to leave Skipton by the narrow lane at the back of this house, and to direct your steps, not toward Harewood, but toward Bolton Abbey, which is not far distant up here among the hills. Call for the abbot, and say that the knight of Sedbergh has directed you there to be provided with steed and with directions for crossing the country at Barnard Castle, instead of going round by Harewood. Now, my young men, hasten; ye are in a dangerous vicinity, and the sooner ye are in the valley of the Tees, instead of the Wharf, the better."

The two Scotchmen thanked their kind hosts very cordially, put on their new garments, and slung their cross-bows so proudly and so sleepily on their persons, that the armorer declared they seemed as if they had been born and trained to the exercise of that noble species of offensive armor.

"My faither rather prides himself on his cross-bow work," Adam said; "and mony a hawk I have brought down wi' them, in my time, on the face o' the rock o' Kinnoul. Mony a gloaming I've lain in the Dragon's Hole watching them."

"I've nailed a wheen, too, on Craig-o-Barn," Macduff added; "but mair than that, I've brought down an eagle on Craig-Vinean wi' a cross-bow, and that's no what every body can say."

"Well, my lads," the armorer said, "as that ye have not quarries of a different kind to deal with, ere ye reach your own firesides again, So be off with you. I do not want you to mix with them hereabout."

He then led them out by a back door into the lane he had spoken of, and they set off briskly in the direction indicated; attending strictly to the instructions they had received regarding what Macduff styled, "hauding the tongues."

They had left Skipton at some distance behind them, and were rising up into a richly wooded part of the country, from whence, at the openings, they had magnificent views of the Craven district, when, turning an abrupt angle of the footpath, they encountered their no small surprise and annoyance, Ben of Sherwood.

"Hallo!" that incredulous major-domo called out, "here's a pretty so do! Our simple

keys transformed into English cross-bowmen, and roaming the woods of Bolton; ay, Sir Reginald had need to watch and follow ye, gentle swains! And ye have two on your track also, besides Sir Reginald, ye little dream of, who will make you sing an air at the top of your voice. By all the ghosts of Sherwood, but you pretended sons of pipers—"

These words of obloquy were scarcely pronounced, when Macduff, who had gradually been bringing round his cross-bow, leveled it at Benson, who would have had his skepticism on the subject of spirits speedily set at rest, had he not, observing the motion, leaped from the footpath into a sort of ditch or ravine, where he was safe from any shaft.

Adam and Tom were hesitating a moment, whether to leap after and seize him, when he wound a blast on a little horn slung at his side; the notes of which they but too well understood to be a call for the blood-hounds. There was no hesitating now—off they set, on the path they had been pursuing, at a pace which very soon increased into a run. On they thus went through the woods, by the fortunately well-defined footpath, until they reached a glade of some extent, presenting a scene to them of a very singular and portentous aspect.

They were still in a part of the country which, although well-wooded, was in its general features, or rocky construction, very similar to that district we have already described, and of which Adam had seen some of the wonders. Here, as more to the westward, the rocks lay in horizontal strata, forming terraces of great beauty, richly covered with ancient forests, or sprinkled over with young trees, and endlessly varied evergreens and mosses; while, here and there, huge masses of the rocks had been protruded into the valleys, or thrown in the most singular positions upon the terraces. The river, after winding its way through some of those detached masses, which had at one time stretched apparently across the whole valley, and essaying afterward to find a course above ground, had worked one through the very rocks; and the whole body of the current, driven from a wide and spacious channel, into a chasm scarcely twenty feet wide, roared through the narrow ravine with a noise as of thunder, and shook, as with a lengthened earthquake, all the adjoining rocky terraces—one of which formed the glade on which our two hunted travelers were entering.

For an instant they stood appalled by the scene before them; for, loud above the noise of the infuriated waters, they heard behind them the baying of the blood-hounds mingled with the shouts of the hunters, and the shrill notes of their horns. What was to be done? Over the awful chasm there was no bridge, not even the trunk of a tree, to aid their escape. They had heard of the horrors of the *Strid*, and there it lay before them; while captivity, tortures, or death pursued them from behind.

For an instant they stood appalled; but the

noise of the hounds became louder and louder, and they could now distinguish even their deep breathing. For an instant they paused, but it was only the next moment to rush forward across the glade with the speed as of arrows, and, at a bound, they cleared the horrid chasm, and stood, saved, on the opposite ledge of rock! Not even the blood-hounds of their pursuers could take that fearful bound; they, stopped by the chasm, stood, awaiting their masters, on the spot from whence their prey had leaped, and vainly endeavoring to regain the scent, which had been cut off by the boiling torrent below.

But the two young men looked no longer than to see that the chase of the hounds was at an end; on they sped through the wood, and ere their pursuers had gained the glade—where, from not seeing their prey, they concluded them lost in the wild and deep caldron—Adam and Tom stood panting at the door of Bolton Abbey.

It was some time ere they could explain to the porter the cause of their visit, and their desire to see the abbot. They were shown into the parlor, however, and had somewhat recovered themselves when the abbot entered. He was a mild and venerable-looking man, who assured them of every reasonable request being complied with which they brought him in the name of the knight of Sedbergh or of Thomas the Armorer. When they described to him, however, the risk they had run, and the escape they had made, his faith in them was somewhat shaken, and they had difficulty in getting him to believe that they actually had overleaped the dreadful abyss; and when he heard of the blood-hounds, he was much troubled.

"Formerly," he said, "we men of peace heeded little the attempts sometimes made to disturb us by the neighboring barons; but now, countenanced as they are by the king himself, they are every where carrying their insolence even within the very cloisters. But I must not spend the time in prating: the huntsmen of Skipton are not easily turned aside from their quarry, and from them no sanctuary is safe."

Ringling a small bell, which the porter obeyed, he ordered horses for his young guests; and ere long, the two Scotchmen, in the character of English cross-bowmen, on which their appearance reflected no discredit, were soon at a good distance from Bolton Abbey, enjoying the free air of the mountains, and the ever-varying, singular, but picturesque scenery on the banks of the Wharf.

They had ascended that river to the very fountain-head, where a small lake, known as Simmer Water, enjoyed the most undisturbed solitude of all lakes, probably, known or unknown in England. Nothing could exceed the picture of desolate seclusion which it presented. A barren mountain, destitute even of heath, presided over it on the north, from which, on each side, other eminences shot forth; gradually

lensening as they approached the lower end of the lake—so sterile, so shelvy, so monotonous, they seemed as if they had been the debris of enormous gray-slate quarries, cast out of the larger hill by the giant hands of antediluvian workmen. Among these gray-slate quarries, Simmer Water simmered under a hot-sun and a cloudless sky, without a tree for shade around it—without a blade of grass to relieve the wearied eye. The heroes on their single slim stem, with their heads buried under their wings, threw out their feathers and circled their bodies, to shield themselves from the scorching rays, until they looked like mushroom decorations of the great stagnant pool; and the bitters, which found shelter under the lazy reeds, in the true spirit of discontent, uttered their doleful cries—as if they, who alone had a roof over their heads, had the greatest reason to complain.

Up the pebbly shore, about a mile in extent, of this miniature Dead Sea, the two horsemen proceeded at a slow pace—the herons shooting up at their approach, and, with their beautiful gyrations, lending a little animation to the scene. On reaching the top of the lake, and before commencing the narrow spiral path which led up the sides of the mountain, they were glad to reach “the shadow of a great rock,” within which they found shelter, and a spring of deliciously cold water. On their horses’ account, as well as their own, they determined to rest there a while: and making fast their steeds, they climbed to an elevated part of the rock, from which they could obtain a view of the lake, without being fully exposed to the sun’s scorching rays.

The side of the water by which their road had lain, was partially hidden from them, but the other shore was distinctly visible, almost to the other end of the lake. They had not long cast their eyes in that direction, when they saw a lady riding at a brisk pace up the side of the tarn, followed by a page or servant. As she and her domestic looked toward the side of the lake hidden from the Scotchmen, they observed them quicken their pace into a gallop, evidently endeavoring to reach the mountain-path before three horsemen, whom Adam and Tom saw turning the rocky knoll which had hid them at first from their view. They were not long in recognizing Benson as one of the horsemen; and Adam could not repress an exclamation, when he thought he could not be mistaken in tracing the majestic air of the Lady Ada in the figure of the lady who was advancing on the other side with the page.

“Macduff,” he said, “be on the alert, my lad: there’s wark for us here, or I’m mista’en. Let’s remain where we are: we couldna be better placed, either for assisting the weaker side, if there be any encounter, or intercepting thae scamps if they be in pursuit o’ that lady.”

The rock within which they were ensconced rose out of another which shot up abruptly from the side of the lake, and on the top of which the paths from each side of the water

met. The two parties, then, directing their steeds toward this point, behoved to meet close to the side of the rock where Adam and Tom were sheltered, unless the lady could considerably precede the cavaliers. It was soon evident that they were sure to meet, for they began the ascent at each side at the same moment; and, to crown the astonishment, if not dismay of the two hidden cross-bowmen, Adam got more and more certain that the lady, although thickly veiled, was the Lady Ada, and Tom saw more and more distinctly that the armorer had been well-informed, and that one of the horsemen who preceded Benson was the Templar Cavendish! His face was pale as death, and his eyes sunk deep in their sockets: but there he was—the dreaded man again alive whom they had left for dead in the saloon of Sherwood Castle. The third rider, Mauners, they had not before seen, but his arms and accoutrements, rather than his bearing, showed him to belong to the ranks of chivalry. Three blood-hounds accompanied them, the baying of whom, as they approached the hiding-place of the Scotchmen, rose into a yell which made their hearts sink within them.

As the two parties approached each other, the Templar rode somewhat in advance; the Lady Ada slackened not her speed, but the veil she usually wore was not raised, until just as she confronted Cavendish, when, as they reined in their steeds, and their faces almost met, and as he called out—

“Murderess and impostor, yield thee!” she lifted it gradually as he pronounced the words, and held it up, pointing with the finger to her forehead.

Cavendish uttered a loud cry and fell back, checking his steed so suddenly that it recoiled to the verge of the rock, and horse and rider fell prone into the deep water. The cry, mingled with the howl of the dogs, was echoed from rock to rock, and hovered around the margin of the lake, as if the foul gnomes and spirits, condemned to haunt the accursed spot, had been startled out of the slumber of ages, and as if Simmer Water itself shuddered at the reception of such an inmate within its fetid and festering bosom.

While this was passing, two of the dogs had advanced to, and turned the rock within which Adam and Tom were sheltered, and Mauners and Benson were drawing near the Lady Ada, who had again dropped her veil, when Mauners, observing the two dogs struck almost at the same moment by two well-aimed shafts, and laid lifeless on the road, attempted to turn and fly; but by this time the two cross-bowmen had leaped from their fortalice, and stood prepared to intercept him. Ere, however, they could approach him, or place their bolts in readiness, he turned his horse quickly, spurred him on the ascending path of the mountain, and was soon lost to view. There remained only Benson, whom the two ladies would soon have disposed of; but Adam observed that the path

who had fainted, was supported with difficulty by the Lady Ada, and he ran to their assistance. Macduff was thus left to cope singly with a much more powerful and active man, who, besides, was mounted and well armed. Benson had turned his horse, intending to follow the example of Mauners; but observing the Highlandman left alone, he spurred toward him, sword in hand.

He had not advanced many paces, when Macduff sent a shaft right through the head of his horse, which instantly fell with its rider. Benson regained his feet, but not before Tom was at his side, who, regarding the inequality of their weapons, closed with him, and engaged in a wrestle, which, for a time, threatened to end unfavorably for the latter, who was much inferior in size and strength to his adversary.

But Macduff had been brought up in a country where wrestling had been studied from the earliest ages, not merely as a science, but as an art of war; and, like the ponies of his native hills, he had strength and agility far beyond what his appearance indicated. Benson seemed often to be overpowering him, when, by some sudden and skillful evolution, Tom was again on his feet, forcing his adversary to act on the defensive, and again to begin the strife which had often seemed almost concluded. The constant repetition of those agile evolutions was gradually wearing out the strength as well as temper of Benson, who was evidently losing breath, while Tom was comparatively fresh. In this way, unperceived by either of them, the combatants had approached the verge of the rock, and, at one of their gyrations, both were precipitated into the lake. They relaxed not their hold as they fell. Firmly each held the other in his grasp as they sunk, and deadly was the wrestle between them as they rose to the surface. Thrice they were lost to view under the water, which gurgled and boiled over the fearful struggle.

As they rose the third time, the Lady Ada, on seeing the page recovering, had gone to the edge of the rock to view the issue of the contest, and her countenance peering over the precipice caught the eye of Benson. The marble statue of Sherwood watching the death-struggle of the unbeliever in the world of phantoms and of spiritual forms! It was too much; with a piercing cry, and with a look of horror, which Macduff never could again shake from his recollection, Benson relaxed his hold, and sank to rise no more.

Macduff swam ashore, much exhausted; and it was well that both Adam and he had something in their wallet to mingle with the pure water of the fountain in the rock, else it is doubtful if he would have been able for some hours to accompany the party. As it was, and on account of the lady also, it was found necessary, on attaining the valley on the other side of the hill, to remain all night at the little village of Aysgarth.

The third dog which had come with the as-

sailants was that which had alarmed Taunton and Mauners the previous day, as it passed from under the pall of its master. As the lady and page, with their two attendant Scotchmen, departed from Simmer Water, it was left sitting at the edge of the lake near the rock, from which position neither force nor entreaties could move it; and next day the domestics from Skipton Castle found it on the same spot, watching the body of the Templar, for which it had dived, and which it had dragged to the shore.

The village where the travelers rested for the night boasted of one very respectable-looking house, besides the hostelry; it was that of the village priest, who was proud as well as happy to receive the lady and her page under his roof. It almost overhung the singular fall of the Ouse, there known by the appellation of Aysgarth Force, one of those horizontal cascades—and one of the finest among them—to which we have already made reference; and if fancy, from that picturesque spot, will imagine two ranges of mountains closing in, with rocky terraces, on the west, and to the east opening out with the same horizontal formations, richly clothed with evergreens, into a wide and well-wooded valley, the temptation offered to Adam and Tom to take one of their frequent moonlight strolls will easily be understood. It will not be difficult also to imagine that the very marked, perhaps even stiff outlines of the view, under a clear moon, offered something of no common interest, even to those who were familiar with the romantic rocks, hills, and dales of the Highlands of Scotland.

As the two Scotchmen were in silence surveying the scene, Macduff touched Adam's arm, and pointed out to him the figure of a man skulking under the rock on which the house of the priest stood—a figure which they soon recognized to be that of Mauners, whose participation in the guilty scenes at Sherwood had been explained to them, after leaving Simmer Water. Both the young men, unfortunately, had left their cross-bows in the inn, but they had each his sword and dirk. While they were considering what was best to be done under the circumstances, Mauners had left his position under the rock, and was now lost to view; but an arrow, which whizzed past Adam and touched Tom's bonnet, indicated to them where to seek him, and they rushed in that direction—Macduff running in, in passing, for his cross-bow. No one was visible near the spot from whence they calculated the arrow had come, but in a few moments they saw on one of the terraces a man endeavoring to pass on unobserved, under the shadow of one of the walls of rocks on the hillside. They lost not an instant in following him, along the natural gallery to which he had taken refuge; but in their haste they had taken different ranges of the gallery, and Adam was on the same level with the fugitive, while Tom, who had begun the chase only one or two feet lower than Adam, found himself, when on a line with Mauners, more than twenty feet below him.

The chase, as seen from below, by a crowd in the village, and by the Lady Ada and the page from the porch of the priest's house, was singularly curious and interesting. At a sufficient height on the face of the hill to be distinctly visible from the valley, and in situations as if they had been chosen so as to show to the best advantage the three dark figures moving as it were across a moonlit panorama, Adam was observed gaining fast on Mauners, when a part of the rock beneath the feet of the latter gave way and rolled over the different ledges below, striking Macduff, and carrying him with it to a still less elevated position.

There was now a gulf between Adam and Mauners, which the former dared not attempt to pass; and beyond the latter, the ledge was so narrow for some distance, that, after advancing two or three steps, he had to cling to the wild plants and brushwood, in order to effect a passage without being precipitated into the valley. One step farther, and he would have gained a wider terrace, where his escape would have been almost certain, had not Macduff, who had recovered from the blow and the fall, directed a shaft from below which struck his arm, made him relinquish his hold, and he fell back upon the first terrace upon which Macduff had stood, and from that to the second, where his mutilated body was found and carried to the hostelry. It is remarked, unto this day, by the villagers, that no grass grows on the grave which rises outside the wall of the church-yard at Aysgarth.

It was with mixed feelings of joy at deliverance from their persecutors, and of sadness at the remembrance of the fearful scenes they had been participators in the previous day, with which the party set out next morning, and on gaining the top of the range of hills which there bounds the valley on the north, and stretches on until it sinks into the woods of Richmond; when, in every direction but one, they saw valleys rich in all that forms the union of the sublime and beautiful in nature—and in that one direction they beheld a level country, bounded only by the horizon, studded with hamlets, villages, and castles; and even the towers of York Cathedral, then forty miles distant, rising aloft out of this “goodly prospect spread around”—they, animated by a feeling of wonder and awe, which was no doubt increased by a sense of the dangers they had escaped—involuntarily and simultaneously reined in their steeds; the lady and page dismounted and knelt, the squires holding their palfreys, remained behind at a respectful distance, doffed their bonnets, crossed themselves, and, when able to speak, burst forth into expressions of admiration, which even the presence of the ladies could not repress, and which, if they displayed little either of science or of a refined taste, were given in the language of unsophisticated nature, offering, like the untutored music of the birds, a tribute of thanks to *the liberal hand which spread out all these riches, and rising, even in their own rude but forcible paths, from nature itself up to nature's God.*

Whether this admiration of the beauties of nature suggested the remark, it would be impertinent to inquire; but as they set out again Macduff said to Peebles—

“He's awfu' pretty, that page, Adam. When he was down on his knees, and lifted up his eyes to the skies, he was liker an angel than any thing I ever saw on this earth.”

“If ye had seen him, Macduff, as I hae done, in a pair o' boddice and a short kirtle, my certy, but ye might hae said that.”

“What do ye mean, Peebles?” Tom asked.

“I mean what I say, Macduff. Man, did you no guess, ere now, that that's a lassie—I mean a leddy? That's the Lady Anne o' Sedburgh that gae us our bows. If I had had ony doubt—there was nae doubt about it, when I brought her the water when she swaff'd awa'. But, wheesht! Lady Ada calls us.”

It was to say that they were now on the way to Darlington—a safer refuge for the night for all the party, than Barnard Castle. In the morning, she added, she and her page were to set out early for Newcastle; but she recommended the Scotchmen to go to Durham, not merely to see what news might await them at the Mitre, but that they should obtain a private audience of the king, and offer to conduct him to where Sir Henry de Hastings was detained, unwell. She had her reasons for desiring of this.

Macduff could not venture to offer opposition to an arrangement to which Adam readily assented: and after seeing the ladies set off for Newcastle from Darlington in the morning, they rode briskly toward Durham. On entering again that city, they avoided, of course, the Golden Cross; but, after putting up their horses at another little inn, they went instantly in quest of the aunt of their friend Mary, whom they found to be a respectable-looking elderly lady, very much inclined, from her niece's good report, to think of them favorably, and to receive them as old friends. From her they learned that the royal cortège was still at Durham, and that they would consequently require to be very circumspect.

The aunt went, with great good-will, to tell the niece that the Scotch lads had returned in English bowmen. Mary, hearing of their safe arrival, after having passed, as they said, many perils, crossed quickly to her aunt's, and flew rather than ran up stairs; when—“Oh, woman, lovely woman, nature made thee,” and nature will have its way—she rushed into the arms of Adam. Not a word was uttered by either; but Macduff saw at once it was a gone case—he could not shut his eyes to the fact that Adam was here “first of men,” and tried all he could to fix his mind on Elgitha, and to feel happy of the thought that Benson was at the bottom of Simmer Water.

They told Mary as much of their wonderful adventures as it was prudent to disclose; but when they came to the chase at the Strid, the risk they ran, and the strength as well as wit

their fear had lent to their feet, she laughed ried by turns.

How was it possible, Adam," she said, "for son so heavy as thou to take a leap such as

Tom, there, who is light, I can under-, but thee I can not."

Indeed, Mary dear," Adam answered, "I nly, I suppose, say with the soldier who chased from Perth to Blairgowrie—a dis- of thirteen miles—by the dragoons, and eaped there something like what we did, h no quite so far—"That was a good loup ook, my man," one of his comrades red- ed. 'Yes,' he said, 'it was a gude loup, had a lang rin till't.'"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STORM.

WHILE the two squires were meeting with ny strange and moving accidents, the two iers, who set out from Newark by way of urch and Wooler, pursued their route south- passed through the wastes of Northumber- nearer the coast, and, of course, more n sight of Alnwick than the road by which "Chevy Chase" between Newcastle and burgh now conveys its passengers.

That day, the Scottish royal cortège, which een at Hexham, was resting at Alnwick, the castle there, and its surrounding es- des, were to be the scene of joustings, and royal recreations. Enough of the preps- ons for those exhibitions was visible from oad which the two horsemen traversed, as lue the younger to ask the elder to accom- him to Alnwick; but as he seemed unwill- o do so, he requested him to excuse him if rned aside for a few hours there, promising ow him, so as to be at the Crown and An- n Newcastle a little later than his com- on, but at all events in the course of the ing. Moredun the more readily consented, had heard much of the prescience as well activity of a hermit, who had been in the Wars with Richard Cœur-de-Lion, who on the banks of the Coquet, and he de- to pay him a solitary visit, ere entering on quires in which he and the young forester to be engaged. Without, therefore, offer- ny opposition, he saw his ardent companion ff at a brisk pace toward Alnwick.

the young forester, or, as we ought now le him, the young knight, descended to the important fortress, which afterward me the patrimony of the renowned Percys, as struck by the uncommon nature of the e which opened upon him.

can not have escaped the observation, even ach-travelers, especially those whose court- prompts them to descend frequently in that try of alternate pulls and precipitous de- ta, that the torrents from the neighboring tains have there literally scooped out pas-

sages to the sea, and that they are not valleys, but ravines, which have frequently to be trav- ersed between Morpeth and Berwick. One of the deepest and steepest of these is that which the Aln has worked out for itself; and thus at Alnwick the banks on each side are of an abruptness excessively annoying for modern coaches; but which were exceedingly striking, picturesque, and pleasing to the eyes of ancient knights.

It may thus be supposed, that as Godfrey of Ettrick descended toward the sea on the left and higher bank, he was very much struck by the scene which presented itself on the opposite bank, as on the arena of an amphitheatre. More than midway above the rocky bed of the river the walls of the castle stretched out on either hand, embracing a vast inclosure, in the middle of which stood the keep and other strongholds of the fortress. On the western side, the ground rose abruptly, almost hiding the village, which was partly on the slope and partly on the level ground at the back of the castle; while toward the east there was an extensive esplanade outside the walls, on a level with the town, but toward the river terminating abruptly and with- out any defenses, in a precipitous and broken bank, which touched below the bed of the clear stream. On that esplanade the lists had been prepared, and a balcony, hung with rich tape- try, above the walls, indicated the place assigned for and now nearly filled by the royal company. Banners streamed at every bastion and turn of the walls—the houses of the town were decora- ted, and all the banks and every height around were crowned with spectators. It was a theatre on a vast scale.

Godfrey descended, crossed the bridge, and rode toward the esplanade with his visor closed, where he took his place among a crowd of other knights at the end of the lists. He had seen nearly the same company before; most of the Northumbrian nobles he knew personally or by sight, so that he required no "guide to the hustings." He remarked that the Lady Isabella of Huntingdon was not among the company; and on noticing the circumstance to a cavalier at his side, he was informed that she seldom appeared in public—that when she did leave the abodes which the royal cortège occupied in their progress, it was generally to take solitary walks or brief rides, accompanied only by two servants—and that, although her health did not seem to have declined so much of late as it had done before leaving Scotland, she was still very delicate and low-spirited.

The forest-knight remained there for some time, almost an unconcerned spectator of many passages of arms, many overthrows, and many incidents, which afforded great delight and amusement to the crowds of people from the town and country, who surrounded the lists, or who witnessed the proceedings from the neigh- boring activities. He was just about making up his mind to resume his journey, when a knight entered the lists, on whose appearance

a general murmur arose from every side, more especially from the royal balcony; for he bore the arms and the accoutrements of an English knight, and those arms had on them the well-known blazony of Sir Henry de Hastings—an arm gules on a ground d'or, to distinguish it from the silver of the Huntingdons. His visor was closed, but he rode his favorite horse; and unexpected as was his appearance, none doubted that it was the long-detested spy at the Scottish court. The countenance of the queen brightened, that of the king darkened.

When he had advanced a little way, and made the usual courtesy—in the performance of which, the young ladies of the Scottish court remarked that Sir Henry had grown stouter since he left Scotland—he ordered the herald, who preceded him, to declare the cause for which he entered the lists, and which the herald did in these words:

"In the name of John, King of England, I, Henry of Aquitaine, known at the court of Scotland as Henry de Hastings, declare all the proceedings of the conference held at Hexham to be null and void—at least in so far as respecteth any union, or projected union, between me, the said lord of Aquitaine, and the Lady Isabella, daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon."

Indignant murmurs rose on all hands, especially from the royal pavilion; in the midst of which the knight turned his horse, and was retiring from the lists. While there seemed to be some discussion going on among the knights near the king, Godfrey advanced into the lists, accompanied by a herald, and intercepted the unexpected and unwelcome visitor nearly in front of the royal tent, while the herald proclaimed—

"The knight of the Order of the Star declareth Henry of Aquitaine, otherwise Henry de Hastings, to be a false and slanderous knight, and to be accessory to the abstraction of the death of the heir to the throne of Scotland."

Great was the emotion caused by this bold proceeding on the part of the young knight, to whom all eyes were now directed. He bowed gracefully toward the king and queen as he was led by the herald to one end of the lists, while his adversary was conducted to the opposite extremity. As they there placed their lances in the rest, and poised themselves in their saddles, the bulk of the one, and the lightness of the figure of the other, were the subject of many remarks. These were speedily interrupted by the sound of the trumpets, and both knights advanced at a furious pace to the encounter, amidst an anxiety, the intensity of which was shown by all in the galleries simultaneously rising and leaning forward—the ladies with flowers and favors ready to throw to the successful combatant. Nor were these all destined for Godfrey—there being hearts at the Scottish court which had not been insensible to the handsome, although somewhat dark and haughty features of Henry de Hastings.

At the first shock, the lance of each horseman was shattered on the shield of his adversary, and each reached the opposite end of the lists ere they succeeded in raining in their steeds. They demanded fresh lances; again prepared for the encounter, and again advanced; but this time the lance of the knight of the Star struck the helmet of Sir Henry and carried it off, unhorsing, at the same time, its wearer. The forest-knight dismounted briskly, and approaching his adversary, beheld, in the features of the prostrate horseman, those of Maelstrom. Starting back, with a feeling of abhorrence depicted in every motion, while his visor still remained closed, Godfrey advanced to the royal balcony, calling out—

"King of Scotland, order the instant seizure of that impostor. Pardon," he added, "most gracious king, that he who demands it is unknown, but the safety of thy crown requires it—secure the person of that man."

But ere he turned, and ere the king could order the guards to advance and to seize Maelstrom, that individual, recovering from the first effects of his fall, had mounted his horse, cleared at a bound the lists, and, through the crowd, who groaned and hooted, even although they had not heard what Godfrey had addressed to the king, he forced a passage, and was soon lost to view.

Godfrey, chagrined at seeing the prisoner, of whom he felt secure, thus escape him, and feeling that any explanation at that moment would be premature, and give rise, perhaps, to expectations which might not be realized, under pretense of following Maelstrom, rode out at the southern gate of the lists, and was soon out of sight also, leaving the concourse of spectators, above all those in the royal balcony, in a state of such confusion, mystery, and wonderment, that the sports of the day were immediately brought to a conclusion.

In the mean time, Moredun, who had left the main line of road at some distance to the south of Alnwick, and was in search of a part of the river Coquet, known to him only by description, became bewildered among the thickets which abounded in that part of its course. He was endeavoring to regain the path he had left, when he was recalled by a soft voice chanting some rhymes to this effect:

"When high-born knights have destinies of glory to pursue—
When paths of honor, rank, and fame are opening to their view—
They turn not back, though hard the path—obstruction in the way
Is but the mist which veils the morn, presaging brighter day."

Surprised, he turned round, and saw, in the thicket which had impeded his progress, a lady, tall, and of a most queenly aspect—the white veil which descended to her feet being attached to her auburn locks by a simple circlet of gold.

Directing him where to make fast his steed, and signing to him to follow her, Moredun had only to advance a few steps, when he found

himself, along with his conductress, in a low cave, sculptured out of the rock, so as to present the appearance of a small chapel.

"Thou rememberest me not, Robert de Moredun?"

And there was something in the voice and look which touched a latent chord in the knight's bosom, and, without himself being able to analyze the feeling, he dropped on one knee before the beautiful vision, as he still thought it.

But it was no vision—no illusion.

"Rise, Moredun," the Lady Ada said, "and come once more to a mother's arms."

And as the astonished young man rose up—this being, so lovely at all times, but rendered so transcendently beautiful by the feelings of a mother chasing from her countenance every trace of the fiercer passions which had so long reigned in her bosom—fell on his neck, dissolved in tears—the first she had shed since the son now before her had been taken, a child, from her reluctant arms.

"My noble son," she said, when she was able at last to subdue the sobs which burst from her recharged bosom; "my noble and valiant son, thy mother would have much to say to thee—but thou wilt learn from a packet I have given for thee into sure hands, why our interview at present must be short. I had sworn not to see thee, nor speak to thee, until a heavy mission given to me were fulfilled. Even now, I might be thought to transgress that vow, but I could not see the son of my hope so near me, and refrain from taking him once more in mine embrace. But I must be brief in what I have to say to thee, Moredun."

Taking hold of his arm and turning him, so that both were in front of a curtain, which hung over a part of the cave—

"Thou hast a high destiny—a noble career before thee, my son."

She drew the curtain gently aside, and Moredun, to his amazement, beheld kneeling before a crucifix, in another division of the cave, the Lady Isabella of Huntingdon. The curtain was noiselessly and rapidly replaced.

"Thou hast seen, my son, that thy mother is not ignorant of where thy affections have been placed; and thou canst not now be ignorant of where her ambition for thee is fixed. Reluctant as I am that thou shouldst so instantly leave me, I must not permit thy further stay. There are weighty reasons for this. On emerging again from the thicket, which conceals the entrance to this cave on the land side, the first path on the right will conduct thee to the road thou seekest.

"Farewell, my dear son. Be courageous and firm on the proud path in life which now opens up to thee. We shall meet again ere I leave these shores."

Still regarding the whole strange incident more as a dream than a reality, Moredun took a tender farewell of the noble lady—something besides the circle of gold whispering to him a higher title and a prouder appellation. He at-

tempted to express his feelings, but he checked himself—afraid that, if he spoke, it might awake him from the pleasing delusion.

He regained his steed, and found the indicated path, but in a state of such abstraction that it was not until he was almost unhorsed by the rudeness of the shock, that, in the narrow opening among the trees, through which he went slowly along, and where there was scarcely room for two horsemen to go abreast, a cavalier rode past him at the utmost speed of his horse.

Thus rudely awoken, he turned, and saw, as he thought, Sir Henry de Hastings receding from his view. There could at least be no mistake regarding either his armor or his steed; he had known both too long and too well to be mistaken.

His astonishment and perplexity were now complete; and he went on his way, his mind so filled and agitated by what he had heard and witnessed, that he missed the road he ought to have taken, and found himself opposite to, and in full view of, Warkworth Castle.

There was something in that view which, in the sombre and dreamy state of mind into which he had fallen, was in perfect unison with his feelings. The frowning fortress, standing, as it seemed, in the midst of the billows of the ocean, which rose against it angrily on the one side, and sunk peaceably but sulkily on the other into the embouchure of the river, over which its dark walls cast a deep and melancholy shade; the depth and darkness of that river, as it wound through the overhanging trees, silent in its course, but rapid and fierce as it went on, scooping out the rocks, and lashing itself into impotent rage as it encountered the billows of the ocean among the sandbanks which encumbered its passage around the castle—all formed a scene in unison with the dark, tumultuous heavings of his own bosom.

As he thus stood, rapt in contemplation, a cry was heard rising up from among the wood, which overshadowed and in many places dipped into the river. He attempted to ride toward the spot from whence he had heard the cry; but the brushwood was there so thick, that his steed essayed in vain to take the path. At that moment, a boat emerged from among the foliage, whirling on toward certain destruction, as it seemed, among the sandbanks and breakers of the bar; and in that boat, stretching out her arms and calling for succor, he beheld the Lady Isabella of Huntingdon.

To attempt to rescue her in the river itself was madness. He rode on toward the embouchure, hoping there to arrest the progress of the boat; but in one of the capricious whirls of the pools among these deceitful sandbanks, the bark was swept away from the spot to which it appeared approaching, and where he hoped to seize and secure it, or at least to throw himself on board, and was carried right into the foaming surf, where he concluded it forever lost. A moment of fearful suspense ensued;

when he saw it bound out of the breakers, and, carried along by the current, recede rapidly from the land. There, tossed on the billows, and calling out for that aid which it was then beyond his power to afford, he saw the helpless lady carried away out to sea in a frail bark, which was soon lost to his view amidst the billows of a fast-receding tide.

As he stood there, the picture of despair, he was found by two of the royal attendants and a boatman, who, in great trepidation, explained the harrowing sight he had just witnessed. The Lady Isabella had gone to the cell among the rocks of the hermit, whom Moredun also had purposed visiting, and of whom he and the Lady Isabella had often spoken in Scotland. Leaving her two attendants, she went up with the tide in a boat, directed by this one boatman—the singular abode of the recluse being only accessible from the river, in the rocky banks of which it had been scooped out, with great skill and no little taste.

After visiting the hermit, she was descending with the returning tide, when, alarmed by the rapidity of the current, she had desired the boatman to fasten the shallop to one of the trees on the bank, and to go in search of her servants. They supposed, as they told Sir Robert, that, in the absence of the boatman, the rope had given way, and that the boat was carried down by the current. The only hope now, the boatman said, was to go to Blythe or Cullercoats for succor; if any of the fishermen there could be tempted to go out to sea under circumstances so adverse; for it was now too evident that the distant storm, which had driven in the sea to an unwonted height at the flowing of the tide, was now approaching, and would soon burst on that coast.

Without an instant's delay, Moredun set out for Blythe; where, by large promises of rewards, he prevailed on some of the boatmen to prepare one of their best fishing vessels, and to set out to sea.

It was now becoming almost dark, owing to the increasing thickness and murkiness of the clouds, preceding the fast approaching storm. Of its approach they had another warning, soon after launching out to sea, in a flash of lightning from the northeast which shot over them, and, coastward, lighted up every creek, nook, and object on the receding beach; seaward they could perceive no vestige of the little, and, it was now feared, lost bark. The sailors, however, who knew well the direction of the currents at the mouths of all the rivers on the coast, never hesitated for a moment, nor changed for an instant their course; even although the appearance of the sky, in the direction they were pursuing, might well have damped the courage of less hardy and less experienced seamen.

In the northeast, whither their course was directed, clouds filled the hemisphere, so dense and so dark that the ordinary obscurity of night would have appeared light beside them. All

that black mass was surrounded by a radiance cast by the rays of the declining sun, the color of which, in contrast with the blackness inclosed, were of dazzling brilliancy; within the dark semicircle, resembling some of the early painters have put on, as the mouth of the infernal regions, the opening of the bottomless pit, myriads of lightning, of all colors and in every direction began to play, as if in hellish mockery of horrors, the ruin, and the devastation they were bringing over the waters, up fair and fertile land to which they were fast approaching.

Ere long, the colors of the rainbow were away; and the anxious explorers in the darkness felt as if entering on some of those dark and horrid regions, where their priests taught that the black billows were tenanted by fiends for which "even to speak would be unlawful." Where the darkness of the firmament was varied by fires, lightnings, and diabolical and so wicked, so fierce, so cruel themselves, endless and varied in the tortures they inflicted, that the tongue would blister in any attempt to describe them. The only idea, they were on the same authority, that could be formed of these evil spirits—and even it was but partial, and inadequate—was this, that any one of those infernal agents visited earth, though he were but the lowest and most powerful in all their armies, he could, unaided, torment a whole district; and would oblige the prayers, masses, penances, fasts, and vigils of a whole cloister of monks vainly going on, during the entire period of his visit, in order to cast him back again to his regions, and to his own servile situation. To the hearers of such sermons, it may be supposed, that the state of the atmosphere presented a very forbidding aspect; but the aspect was too bold, and partook too much of the spirit of those who have succeeded in their march over the mountain-wave, to be back, when chivalry demanded, and would not quire their aid.

Thus they held on, until the darkness became impervious; while the electricity in the air brought into action every phosphoric and electric principle of the elements, and, in the meantime, the vessel they were in seemed cutting its way through a sea of fire. At a stroke of the oars there were streams lifted out of the surging waves, which fell in burning drops, and were reflected with the dark and troubled bosom of the deep. Thus they held on, until the storm burst forth in all its fury; the heavens seemed to be peopled with the elements were peopled with spirits leaping over the deep, the thunder rolled without mission, and the rain fell as if another world were about to visit the devoted world.

It was in the midst of this chaos of elements that one of the fishermen called out that a boat was in sight; but at that instant lightning, as if subdued by the water which

from the skies, ceased its frequent and brilliant displays, and they had to wait some time ere another flash came to aid them in their research. When it did come, looking in the direction the fisherman had indicated, something white was observed on the bosom of the deep. They pulled hard in that direction, and when the next flash of lightning came, they saw the dark outline apparently of a boat rising upon a wave, and over the end of the boat lay something, the whiteness of which contrasted with the black waters around. For a time again it was lost to their view, but at the next opening of the clouds they were close to it; a grappling-iron was thrown overboard, and Moredun and two of the fishermen were preparing to leap from the larger into the smaller bark, when the surging of a giant billow threw loose the grappling-iron, and the lesser boat was again carried out of view.

At that moment one of those partial, but sudden and violent currents of air which so often accompany a thunder-storm, took the fisherman's craft on the starboard, and carried it far to the northward, as well as nearer the shore; and it was some time ere the exertions of the rowers could recover in any degree the way they had lost, and stand out again more to sea. Even then, the opening in the clouds caused by the wind enabled them to observe that they were in a very critical position. Towering among the clouds on the northwest rose the rocky island of Lindisfarne, on which the renowned monastery, lighted up, gleamed from afar as a beacon o'er the deep; while lights, hurrying hither and thither, indicated the wreck of some ill-fated vessel on that dangerous coast.

It was now necessary at all hazards to stand out more to sea; not only to try to come again on the track of the boat, now almost given up for lost by the sailors, but also to avoid being driven on the Holy, but rocky, Island. In this they were aided by a change in the wind, which now began to follow the storm, and the obscurity lessening at the same time, they ventured to hoist the sail half-mast high; and although they were every instant overwhelmed with clouds of spray, as wave after wave broke over the audacious little vessel, they continued to cut their way bravely out to sea. They were rewarded for their bravery. Not long had they continued thus to buffet with the waves, when they saw drifting toward them the object which they had despaired of regaining. The grappling-iron was again thrown with better success; and Moredun and one of the sailors leaped on board the boat, at the bottom of which a female form in white lay apparently lifeless, while a part of her garments, that which had been visible at a distance, floated over the stern of the boat.

Moredun took the Lady Isabella in his arms, and carried her to the larger vessel. As she lay there, he thought he felt some pulsation, and observed a gentle heaving of the bosom;

and ere long, after wrapping the body in coverings, which had been protected from the rain, he had the blessed assurance that life was returning, and that, although still unconscious, she might yet be spared to her family, and, hope whispered, to himself. He, therefore, urged the boatmen to put forth every effort to regain the land; and as the storm was dying away in the distance, and the lights on the shore to the southwest were becoming visible, they plied their oars with diligence, and rose swiftly and hopefully over the billows.

These lights proceeded from the Priory of Tynemouth, which, lit up for the vespers, shone as a beacon far over the troubled waters, and in contrast with the circumstances in which they had been placed, assumed to the boat's crew, as they drew near it, an appearance unusually splendid and imposing.

Tynemouth Priory, situated on a rocky peninsula, projecting a considerable distance into the sea, was a striking object not only from the bays on each side of the promontory, but from the bar of the Tyne, and from the coast on each hand—almost from Bamborough on the south, unto the Ferne and Holy Islands on the north. Its importance and value as a beacon was well understood by the monks; and when storms visited the coast, they never failed to prepare it for the vespers, with particular attention to the effect of the lights from without.

On this occasion more than usual care was bestowed, and more than the usual profusion of lamps and tapers were placed in due order; and the effect was magical. The pointed windows, remarkable for their number, their height, and the lightness of their structure, seemed, to the wearied boat's crew, each of them one single blaze of light, which, illuminating the rocky shore, and reflected far and wide on the still tumultuous billows, made them feel as if they were exchanging the horrors of purgatory for the happiness of regions where tempests were forever unknown; while the notes of the evening hymn—that hymn, the origin of which is lost in the midst of ancient times, when man held communion with the angels—when the notes of that most sublime of all music re-echoed from the rocky coast came bounding to them over the subsiding waters, as songs of victory and shouts of welcome to those who were returning from scenes of terror and of danger, to the rest and repose of a better and a happier land—the untutored sons of the mountain wave doffed their bonnets, and sunk on their knees in feelings of thanksgiving to the Preserver and Guardian of all.

On approaching the haven, a wicker couch was constructed, on which the Lady Isabella was laid, and, still in a state of unconsciousness, carried up by the winding stairs cut in the precipitous banks. She was in the body of the magnificent edifice ere life and consciousness had entirely returned; and when she awoke in the midst of the service—the chapel one blaze

of light, and the music floating around her, while the knight of Moredun was kneeling at her side—she felt for a moment as if all the perils, the evils, and the miseries of the world in which she had suffered so much within so short a time, had passed away, and that a new and blissful state of existence had opened upon her.

The next moment, the recollection of what she had endured came over her, and, murmuring the name of her father, she sunk back exhausted, but not altogether insensible, on the breast of her deliverer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIRE.

GODFREY gained the Crown and Anchor at Newcastle, ere the storm which he saw following him had burst forth in all its intensity; but enough of it had reached him to render the shelter of the projecting leaden roofs of the hostelry acceptable, and to mark his progress along the passage, and on toward the ample fire-place, by a watery course of some depth and breadth. He threw off his cloak, but he retained his armor, and still kept the visor closed.

There was a dullness about the usually cheerful kitchen which he never before had observed; the guests were few and silent; the desk where Michael seemed heretofore a fixture, was empty; there was no Deborah with her face of beauty and mirth; and the countenance of the hostess, usually so good-humored, vacant, and smiling, was thoughtful, if not absolutely gloomy and forbidding.

Godfrey ordered something, and sat down at the small table near the fire.

"The storm threatens to be serious," our friend the barber-lawyer remarked to Elstob the butcher, as a bright flash of lightning crossed the easements; "and that knight had need," he said in an under tone, "of his armor and his closed visor without, but, methinks that beside that comfortable fire they are somewhat superfluous."

"I do not stand in need of thy razor, friend," Godfrey said, turning quickly round; "and for thy tongue the visor offereth no obstacle. I miss thy husband and thy niece, dame," as the landlady put what he had ordered on the table. "I hope they are in their wonted good health?"

The landlady attempted to speak, but could not; and turning away into one of the family recesses, wept aloud.

"Missus is melancholy a bit," the butcher said; "her stalls are empty, as you have remarked, valiant sir; and when the stalls are clean—you know the proverb, sir?"

"It is a case, sir, pardon me," the lawyer remarked timidly, after the rebuff he had received; "it is a case, sir, of abduction; I will

not affirm positively of forcible abduction, but when there is a disappearance without any appearance—"

"Then one might affirm," Godfrey interrupted him with, "that there never had existed any beard even before the razor was applied. Why, how now," as a peal of thunder shook the inn to its foundations; "are these the sort of evenings you are accustomed to in Newcastle? I never encountered any thing so terrific, even among the mountains."

"Ah, you come from the hills?" Elstob remarked; "pray, sir, excuse me, have you heard any thing of the late fair at Wooler? He went the cattle?"

"They went off very quickly," Godfrey replied; "for a party of the Turnbulls, very properly named, I think, came and took them without asking the price. That was a case of abduction, and forcible too, at all events, a barber?"

"Abduction, sir," and the man of law and physic bristled up; "it was a case, sir, of rapine and stouththreif—let me ask, Sir Knight, if either law or justice can make a living of it if there be nothing left in the country for him to argue, or justice to decern the costs of. Such is the insecurity, valiant sir, of life and property, that while our flocks and herds are carried off without litigation, our landlords and their beautiful nieces disappear without investigation. I have urged on Dame Plummer the necessity of a precognition in the case of the disappearance of her husband and niece, but she only cries when I speak about it, and goes on repeating, 'Oh, they will come back! Oh, they will come back!' I have offered even to conduct the search on the principle of no cure no pay, and yet she remains obstinate. I do not understand it, Sir Knight, I do not, and that is what I never said of any thing in my life before."

"It is indeed, sir," the butcher added, "a strange affair. Some allege"—and here he stooped over toward Godfrey, and spoke very low—"that if the search were for the niece, and did not include the husband, it would be undertaken more readily."

Just then a noise was heard at the door, above that of the thunder, and a stentorian voice demanding assistance to carry in a package of some weight.

"Coomie, dame, coome," Joe the carrier called, "send sommun t'assist me, quick. It's the devil's own weather, and I wish I were whoame."

"What is it, Joe?" the landlady asked.

"Oh, summatt from the Golden Cross at Durham, dame; but it's dommed heavy—I never has had ought like it afore frae Wilson."

Elstob and another stout customer went and assisted Joe with the heavy box, which was shoved into one of the recesses; Joe departed, and the conversation resumed its course.

"There was no disagreement nor any thing unpleasant," Godfrey asked of the butcher,

the disappearance of Plummer and his
"me at all, sir, none at all." Elstob re-
"There was some little bellowing in the
with the arrival of the Scots soldiers, then
Sir Henry de Hastings, as well as with
an whom nobody could ever make out—
ack sheep, as I always thought him."
hat man do you allude to?"
"he that came here," Elstob replied,
than once last year, and always looked
were on a wrong errand, whether he
or not. He had a foreign name, which I
t recollect. It was in the midst of a sort
fusion—"

as a disagreeable noise, between a groan
yawn, was heard from the other end of
the room, which stopped the conversation,
made all present look toward the door.
Nothing was seen, and nobody entered.

Elstob resumed—"That man was reported to
dealations with evil spirits—"

as another groan more loud, distinct, and
easible, made all again turn their regards
toward the other end of the room; and the more,
including the knight, went in that di-
rection to examine into the cause of it. No-
however, was found which could in the
end explain the cause of a sound so un-
usual and so inexplicable in the midst of the
of a storm which of itself was enough to
be the stoutest heart; and they were return-
ing the warmer and lighter end of the apart-
ment in a state of mind by no means either
satisfied or happy, when a still more loud and
more singular noise issued from the recess
in which the box had been deposited.

It was certain that now every customer would
have made his escape from the inn without a
moment's delay, but the storm prevented all
that, and all save the Knight of the Star
remained toward the fireside. He alone advanced
toward the recess; and being very soon con-
vinced that the noise proceeded from the box
in which the carrier had left, he drew it out to
the middle of the room, where, lifting its lid,
and surveying its contents, he broke out into
a fit of laughter, so loud, so hearty, and so
sudden, that the noise of the storm was
obscured by it, and the rafters of the long room
shook again. He then held out his hand to-
ward the box, and, to the amazement of all in
the room—to the amazement of all, but to the
amazement of some—he assisted Michael Plummer,
lord of the Crown and Anchor, to stand
up to show himself, *in propria persona*, to
those who were now more puzzled to account
for his appearance out of such a hiding-place,
than they ever had been to account for his dis-
appearance. Among those who looked dis-
tinctly at him, one counted his wife; she was at
a state of great perplexity and wonder,
and did not run to meet him with
arms outstretched.

As for poor Michael himself, he stood the
stare of astonishment, of terror, and of

distraction. His recent scenes in the cavern;
his indistinct recollections of the Golden Cross
at Durham; the flashing of the lightning; the
roaring of the thunder; his wife standing there
beholding him; his old cronies shaking and
grinning with affright and astonishment; and,
amidst all this confusing scene, a knight in
armor, with his visor closed, it was too much
for him—he shut his eyes, and would have
fallen back into the coffin, as he thought it,
from which he had arisen, if he had not been
upheld in the arms of the knight. The cold
feeling of that armor, and the certainty it
brought with it that the scene he now looked
upon was real, and not a vision, was the first
thing which brought him to his senses; and
although he was utterly incapable of speech, he
suffered himself to be conducted to a chair, and
to be once again set down peaceably at his own
fireside. But ever and anon he cast strange,
inquiring looks toward his wife and friends;
and ever and anon his bewildered gaze would
turn from them, and rest long and anxiously
on the figure of Godfrey.

During one of those surveys of Godfrey,
something came across his mind which affected
him to a most painful degree: his eyes were
distended until they appeared about to burst
from their sockets, his hair stood on end, and
his jaw fell; all looked for his falling into con-
vulsions, but the paroxysm found vent in words,
and exclaiming—

"It is he, it is he!—it was Maslstrom, not
I, that did it!" he fell back fainting in the large
chair.

Godfrey now recommended that he should
be put immediately to bed, which the barber
and butcher accomplished. His wife was too
nervous, from the shock she had received, to be
of the smallest service in the operation; she
went up afterward, however, to see him, and
reported, on her return, that he had slept a
little, and seemed rather more collected, al-
though not at all disposed to speak, or to un-
ravel the mystery in which he had gone away,
and the still greater mystery of his return.

As, on a second visit, her report was still fa-
vorable, Godfrey spoke to her in private, and
asked leave to go to the room of her husband,
as he said he thought he could do something
to awake him out of his lethargy, and to set his
mind in some degree at rest. On her granting
him permission, he went up stairs to Michael's
room, on entering which he took off his helmet,
and allowed his fair and blooming countenance
to be seen, while his light ringlets fell in masses
on his steel corselet.

"Bless my heart," the landlady exclaimed,
taking him all in her arms, "it is our own kind
Godfrey! Husband, husband, arouse thee! it
is our own Godfrey come to see thee!"

Michael Plummer turned his eyes in that di-
rection, without attempting to stir, while a faint
smile stole over his lips, which again speedily
changed into the former half-vacant, half-fright-
ened expression of countenance.

"Plummer," Godfrey said, in a mild tone of voice, "thou must strive against this state of lethargy, because the time is brief, and it may be to thy detriment if that which hath brought me here be prosecuted without thy concurrence. Fear nothing, if thou act honestly and openly; but fear every thing, if there be the smallest attempt to cloak or to continue that system of deceit by which, in professing to act for the noble chief of Etrick, thou art making thyself but the tool of a villain, who has aims too high for thee to comprehend. I leave thee for the night; see that in the morning thou art prepared to act as a man, and what is more, as an honest man."

Thus saying, Godfrey left the apartment and descended to the kitchen, or public room, which—the storm being now at an end—was forsaken by all the customers, and the wife of Plummer, who descended with him, was now his only companion.

"There is something in all this, my worthy dame," he said, "which I can not well comprehend. What meaneth the absence of thy niece, and this strange mode of return on the part of thy husband?"

In reply, she told him all she knew, which, in fact, added little to the information he already possessed; and although he felt annoyed that Moredun had not made his appearance, he attributed his non-arrival to the storm, concluded that he had taken refuge in some village for the night, and went early to bed, where he was not long of falling into a sound and refreshing slumber.

He was not, however, allowed to enjoy it so long as he might have desired, for, some time during the "short hours," he was awake by the mistress of the house, who told him that she was alarmed about her husband, who had left his bed about an hour before, and had not returned. She would not have felt so uneasy in regard to this, but that there was a smell of fire in the house, and she was afraid that perhaps the lightning might have, unobserved, struck some part of the building.

Godfrey immediately arose, buckled on all his armor, not knowing what might befall, under the apprehensions which Dame Plummer had expressed, and descended to the public room. The smell of fire was there not only perceptible, but strong; and what was more, a thick smoke, ascending through crevices in the pavement, showed that the fire came from below, and could not by any possibility have originated with the storm from without.

Godfrey, having formerly known all the intricacies of the Crown and Anchor, hastened to a corner of the room, where, on lifting a trap-door, hid by the usual seat of Michael Plummer, a volume of smoke ascended, which sent him back, almost stifled, into the middle of the room. Ere he could make another essay, flames, in place of smoke, arose out of the opening, to which he had thus unscientifically admitted the air, and in a few minutes the roof of the kitchen,

or sitting-room, was in flames. It was so evident that to save the building was hopeless, he therefore pushed the stupefied mistress at the door, flew behind to where the servants and the stable-boys slept, and ordered them instantly to take the horses and cattle out of the stables and other out-houses, and to secure them in an adjoining field. This done, he tried to retrace his steps through the house. It was impossible; the fire was already bursting through the floor of the upper chambers, and streaming from many of the casements.

He now rushed toward the street, where the crowd had begun to collect, and there all smoke, fire, uproar, and confusion. The noise was so great that for some time he took no notice of the signs which some of the multitude made, and the cries they uttered, on pointing toward a part of the building, where, at one of the windows, a young man was vainly calling for help.

"Oh, for God's sake, Godfrey!—oh, for the sake of Heaven! try to save that young man," the landlady called out; "he came late in the evening—I quite forgot him!"

To ascend by the interior was impossible, and Godfrey had nowhere seen any ladder. An idea struck him—

"Who is bold enough to risk his life for that young man?" he called aloud.

No one answered to the appeal.

"Bring hither mattresses and clothes," he called to a knot of women huddled together at a corner of the street, "and throw them down before the window here."

While the women bustled about in execution of his orders, he turned the corner of the building, ran toward the small door in the gable of the house, with which the reader is already acquainted, forced it open and rushed in through the smoke.

The deepest anxiety now manifested itself on the part of all who had witnessed this hazardous attempt, although none essayed to follow Godfrey—for flames as well as smoke began to issue from the door by which he had entered. Some minutes elapsed, but no one appeared at the window, and as the fire was raging fiercely in the room immediately below that in which the young man had been seen, and some gleams were rising even into that apartment—both were now given up for lost. The poor afflicted landlady was in front of all the mourning crowd weeping and wringing her hands—the image of a bereaved mother, for—

"Oh!" she sobbed out, "he was dearer to me than any son, that young prince;" and her words were carefully noted and handed about even in the midst of the confusion—"and for a stranger, too, he hath done it—always good—good—good Godfrey"—and the simple kind-hearted creature gave way to as unfeigned a burst of irrepressible grief as ever rose from the breast of a mother.

Just then, Godfrey appeared at the window, and a cry of joy arose from the multitude.

embodied in a moment, for there he was, black with smoke, and bearing a body in his arms, wrapped in a coverlet. How were they to descend? There was no ladder: the flames were rushing from the windows immediately under them, and no one could approach the wall.

The sight the inn presented at this moment was very striking. The fire commencing from underneath, some of the rooms, and all the roofs of the irregular but somewhat extensive pile had still resisted the devouring element. But the heat from below was dreadful, and, ever and anon, the barrels of inflammable liquors in the cellars taking fire, sent up explosions which shook even the old castle in the neighborhood to its very foundation. By-and-by these ceased, but the heat ascending, had now reached the roofs, which, like those of many of the churches of that period, were entirely covered with lead. The lead, melting under the influence of the furnace below, came pouring down through the flames, like cascades of molten silver; and if it were possible to apply the phrase to such a scene, it might well have been said, that a more beautiful sight never was looked upon, nor one which realized more strikingly all that has been written or imagined of fairy cascades, or of palaces of the Eastern Peri.

To Godfrey of Ettrick, all the beauty and grandeur of the spectacle was happily lost, for he was at the extreme end of the house, the roof of which was still intact. Below him the flames raged, and were just bursting through the floor, and about to compel him to throw his burden to the heap of mattresses on the street, and to allow himself to drop from the window, when that which it would have been dangerous for him to have thus attempted, either for himself or the youth he had in his arms, was effected in a most singular manner by the fire itself. He was just leaning forward, and turning the body he carried so as to allow it to pass the window, when the floor gave way beneath his feet, and, borne down by his own weight, his load, and the weight of his armor, the joists yielded in the direction of the wider window below, and literally *launched* him out, and the body he still held firmly in his arms, unhurt, through the flames upon the pile of beds, cloaks, and quilts!

Another and a more prolonged shout from the assembled multitude welcomed his almost miraculous escape. He was immediately conducted to the neighboring house of a good Samaritan, bearing still in his arms the burden which seemed light to him as a sucking child to its mother, and which he would suffer no one to take from him. A stranger, who said he was a mediciner, accompanied them into the house: the young man was laid on a bed, and after the application of some restoratives, was awake to consciousness, and soon after fell into a deep and refreshing slumber, in which he still lay when Godfrey called about an hour afterward.

On his return to the blazing relics of the

Crown and Anchor, the fire had attained the part of the building also from which he had escaped, and it was now from one end to the other a mass of flames, mingled with the fast decreasing jets of the melted metal. This magical appearance was now not of long continuance; the heavy roofs gave way, and a cloud of dense smoke arose which darkened all the sky. This lasted only for a few moments; the flames burst forth again—now strengthened by the enormous blocks of wood thrown by the roofs into the burning pile; and, in a column of fire, sent high up into the heavens—seen far and wide through the counties of Northumberland and Durham, and throwing its beams even over the busy bar of the Tyne—the old hostelry of the Crown and Anchor of Newcastle bade adieu to its many and widely-spread customers.

All the long night the smouldering mass of this funeral pyre continued to fret and turn, and to cast up at intervals clouds of smoke and streams of burning embers. Toward morning the flames sunk, smothered and writhing, under the heaps of rubbish with which the smoking volcano was now encumbered; and when the light of dawn came, it was a pillar of smoke which arose high into the skies, to designate the spot where the favorite resort of the idlers of Newcastle in the twelfth century had stood.

In the morning, too, among the embers of the caves below the inn, a body, supposed to have been that of the landlord, Michael Plummer, was found; but whether he had fallen a victim to an accidental fire, or had perished in a funeral pile, reared to conceal his own deeds, and those of his associates in crime, would have remained one of those hidden things which time never could have revealed, but for an incident which will be narrated in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ARBOR.

THE house which the aunt of Mary inhabited at Durham, adjoined the garden of the Bishop's palace, whither the cortège of King John had taken up their abode, after an altercation, in which the bishop found he had no chance. The king had already, by his ever-ready satellites, the army at York, cut down all the hedges of the diocese, and with them filled up the ditches; so that the wild animals were enjoying a series of holidays, and disporting themselves in the cultivated fields. To this act, John threatened, privately in the bishop's ear, to add that of making a barrack of the Cathedral itself, if the doors of the palace, and the hospitality of its halls, were not thrown open to him; so the prelate made a virtue of necessity, and sent a very polite invitation from the palace for the king himself and all his retinue, who, to show their high respect for the Church and its dignitaries, did not lose an hour in accepting it.

Thus Adam and Macduff found themselves nearer their dreaded enemy than they had calculated upon in taking refuge in that house, and their first impression was to leave it forthwith; however, on second thoughts, they considered that if they lay quiet, they were just as safe there as elsewhere, until they had formed their plans for leaving Durham altogether. If they had mutually confessed the truth, they had come to that city, not in obedience to the Lady Ada's wishes, but to see Mary; and they had no more intention of asking an audience of King John, than of inquiring for the ghost of Sir Reginald at the Mitre.

They were consulting, toward evening, whether, in their English cross-bowmen dresses, and under the light of the moon, they might venture to take a stroll by the side of the river, which lay at no great distance below them, when Adam, who was standing near the casement which looked into the palace garden, had his attention directed to something which seemed to engage him very intently.

"What is that keeps you glowering in that way, Adam?" Macduff asked.

"Wheesh, man, wheesh," Adam replied, "dinna speak sae loud. I saw a monk come in by that wee door there, in a very sly kind o' way, to that arbor near the wa'; and if I'm no very far mista'en, it was the king himself went across the garden to meet him. Eh, man! if I were as light as you, I would be sair tempted to creep along and hear what they are cracking about; but though I can loup sometimes, as ye ken, I tak up owre muckle room to gang cannily among the bushes."

"I've a great mind to try it, Adam," Tom said. "Here, help me out at the window; hand fast till I get my feet fairly on the wa'—that'll do. I'll no be long in being back."

Macduff crept along the wall on all-fours, until he reached a clump of young yew-trees, which extended, with scarcely any opening between them, to the arbor. He descended behind them, and went on between them and the wall; and, by going sideways to avoid touching the branches, he was soon close to the arbor, and within hearing of its two tenants. He trembled all over, and was nearly betraying himself, when the first words he heard, in the too well-known voice of Maelstrom, were—

"I learn, your Majesty, that two Scotchmen, answering their description, were seen leaving Durham that very day in company with Sir Reginald Taunton."

"It is not possible," the king rejoined; "Taunton was in search of agents to assist him in unraveling some of the threads of this affair, which becomes more and more intricate every day; and it is not likely that he would have taken into his confidence two raw Scotchmen, of whom he could have known nothing."

"But, your Majesty, pardon me," Maelstrom said, "I do not see in what respect it becometh more intricate."

"Body o' me!" the king exclaimed, "thou

must be approaching thy dotage, Maelstrom! That thou, who didst send so straight a shaft from the walls of Chalus, which seemed to come to me the undisputed possession of the throne, shouldst see that throne shaken by the intrigues of those whom I thought to be in the graves—that thou, of all men, shouldst see prisoner after prisoner escape me, spy after spy deceive me, thread after thread of these meshes broken, and yet say that thou seest not in what respect the affair becometh more intricate—thou who' oughtest to have kept it clean and unwounded—verily, it chafeth me!"

"His Majesty is pleased," Maelstrom answered, "to visit the sins of agents who employ raw Scotchmen, on the head of one who has served him better than he hath served his own interests."

"By Saint Anthony, but this is too much," the king said, angrily. "We have found that the child was not silenced with its mother—that it was seen with the woman who was known as thy wife or leman; and when we saw thee where is that child, or where is that woman, thou talkest of raw Scotch boys and unrequited services. Then this sister of ours whom we had first buried in Clairvaux and then shut up in Sherwood, escapes; we track her to thy near neighborhood—we have tracked her even to the very borders of Scotland; we ask thee to seek out her retreat, and thou fillest by setting the sins of other agents before us. I send thee to Scotland to aid Sir Henry de Hastings in a secret and important enterprise, on the faith of the execution of which, I go through the farce of betrothing my daughter to the Scottish Lion's son. Sir Henry disappears; a Scotch boy comes in his place, and about to conduct me to him, when the boy disappears. And now thou comest, not to inform me where the knight is, nor how his enterprise and thine hath succeeded, but to tell me that the boy, with another whom I had picked up by the way, the servant of another wandering and missing cavalier, has left Durham in the company of him whom I sent to bring them to me—in the company of Sir Reginald Taunton. Maelstrom, there is something in all this which I comprehend not—there is something which savoreth of treachery."

"John of England," Maelstrom answered, with a seriousness and with a change of voice so remarkable, that Macduff looked hard to see that a third party had not joined the conference—"John of England, I shot a shaft for thee from the walls of Chalus, which laid low the most valiant and the most honest heart in England, to make room for the—" he paused a moment, and then with a sneer added—"the deepest. I put thy nephew into thy hands, and thou mightest sleep secure, and thou saidst 'Lo, yet another victim ere I rest in peace.' That victim is given thee, and yet thou sayest 'Go, seek a dead child among the living!' Yet have feeble agents and weak bolts and bars in Sherwood, which can not hold fast those thou

best buried in Clairvaux, and thou sayest to me, 'Are not those whom Cavendish and Tarnion could not guard at thy very doors?' Thou sendest me to Scotland to be a spy upon a spy, and because the first spy is a traitor, Maelstrom must be a villain. Thy drunken guards let loose thy captives, and thy knights take them from their service, and thou sayest, 'How now, Maelstrom?' They are carried off to the south, and because I find them not in the north, my search savoreth of treachery! In sooth, John of England, by the tomb! thy service savoreth somewhat of ingratitude."

"It is not thee," the king replied, in a milder strain, striving to hide his rage; "it was not of thee I spoke when I spoke of treachery."

"Of whom, then?" Maelstrom demanded; "if it be of thy guardian knights and Templars, they are thy minions, not mine. If it be of this Hastings, thou hast reason. To serve his own ends, not those of him whom he professed to serve—to gain the hand of a fair maiden by stratagem, which he could not obtain by favor—he proposed to me to seize a hostage for that hand which she would be glad to gain back at any price. I, the unthanked servant, the traitor, refuse to aid that purpose, which a storm, I suppose, enables him to effect; and now, because either his own conscience or his schemes prevent him coming into the presence of him whom he hath betrayed, Maelstrom must answer for his treachery!"

"But he seeketh not to avoid me," the king said, "he sendeth for me; and as the message of that Scotchman bore, he must be somewhere on the coast, in this vicinity; and to thee every corner and cranny of this coast must be well known."

"And how knowest thou, King of England," Maelstrom replied, "that this is not a ruse to lead thee on a false quest, and to throw suspicion on him who refused to aid his nefarious plans? I do indeed know too well this coast, because, to serve an ungrateful monarch, I determined myself to act the part of a captain of the contrabandists; to be the companion of the ruffians—the boon companion of the resorters to taverns and caverns. Thinkest thou, King John, that if he had been within my reach, I had not dragged him before thee, that thou mightest have heard his treachery from his own mouth? Thinkest thou that if I had any one of those whom thy imbecile tools allow to escape from at every turn, I would not at once sacrifice them to my own vengeance as well as mine? And whence ariseth all this? It is because thou reposest not thy trust in him who hath sold himself to thy service. What boots it to slay thy brother—to bury thy sister—to slay thy nephew—if those of Sherwood are to do what hath been so securely done? John of England, this can be borne with no longer. Thou hadst more scruples about killing the Queen of Sicily outright because she was thy sister, than thou hadst in regard to thy brother's death, and wished her to die by inches in thy pre-

cious summer-house of Sherwood, thou mightest at least have employed men, and not Templars and cavaliers, to be her jailers."

"By the body of my father!" King John said, stamping with his foot, "but this insolence can not be endured."

"Why endure it, then?" Maelstrom replied with a sneer. "Call thy guard—and if thou dost hesitate to tell them why thou deliverest a faithful adherent into their hands, I shall tell them myself. But, John of England, hear it thou must. If thy brother's bastard hath escaped—"

"He is no bastard," the king replied, his passion overcoming his prudence—but instantly perceiving his error, he added—"that is, the fictitious marriage with the Lady Ada was so perfect in its imitation, that mine enemies may occasion me trouble to invalidate it."

"Why not have told me this sooner?" Maelstrom asked as incautiously.

"Ah! is it even so?" John said quickly; "then thy *démarche* hath not been so zealous? There wanted something to quicken thy research? Is it not so, Maelstrom?"

"Were it even so, King of England," Maelstrom replied, "this it is to give but half confidences. Thou trustest thy imbeciles of Sherwood too much; thou allowest them to strangle and to bury a female for a male child; and thou sayest to me, 'Search out this bastard.' Why, if he were a bastard, as thou saidst, what harm could he have done thee? And now thou sayest, 'He was my brother's heir—his lawful heir, is it not? And thou takest this Maelstrom, this slave, this worm, this dotard—dotard was the word, was it not?—to be so poor a slave, so abject, that he would display the same energy, the same zeal in searching for a worthless brat, as he would for a child whose existence involves the security of a crown! Verily, King of England, but this would almost provoke me to tell thee something which might well make thee tremble."

"What is it, accursed villain?" John cried, rising and attempting to take Maelstrom by the throat, who, however, evading the hands of the king, said, calmly—

"If thou thinkest, that by the same means which thy minions took, when they strangled thy brother's wife and daughter, yet murdered neither, thou wilt extort the truth from me, thou wilt err more grievously than when, in taking the life of Arthur of Brittany, thou didst deem the elder branch of the Plantagenets to be extinct."

"What meanest thou, Maelstrom?" the king said, gasping for breath.

"I always mean what I say, King of England," Maelstrom replied; "which is what all kings, not excepting John of England, can not affirm with truth."

"Maelstrom," John said, after a brief pause, in which he strove to repress his indignation, as well as alarm—"Maelstrom, this altercation is as unseemly as it is unprofitable. If the rewards already given or promised—"

"The latter being always in striking contrast with the former," Maelstrom interrupted him by saying, with a sneer which sounded almost like a laugh.

"If" the king resumed, as if not noticing the interruption—"if larger rewards are wanting, name them, and they shall be bestowed, even before leaving this spot; but there is that in thy words which permits neither equivocation nor delay. If it be not a mere fabrication—a mere forgery of thine own brain, what is it thou wouldst have me to believe I have yet to fear?"

"Hear this, then, John of England," Maelstrom answered; "and let each word bring with it the sting of repentance in having employed such sycophants, such imbecile agents as those courtiers, while thou hadst men of nerve and force to execute, and of head to comprehend thy views. My budget is somewhat long; but it behoveth thee to hear it. Thy chosen secretary, the Templar, the man from whom thou hadst no secrets—but why say I this? who among us has not known thy inmost thought? who among us hath not in honeyed words been told this?"

"To the fact, Maelstrom, to the fact!" the king said, impatiently.

"This Cavendish, then, this secretary, will have no more false testimonies to witness—no more false testaments to seal—he hath died by the hand of— Hast thou strength to hear it, John of England?"

"On, devil, on!" the King of England gasped out.

"By the hand"—Maelstrom almost shouted as with triumph—"of the Lady Ada, who still liveth!"

King John leaped from his seat, as if struck by an arrow, and exclaimed—

"It is false, slave!"

"If it seem false," Maelstrom pursued, "there remaineth yet that to be told which is still more incredible. The day following that on which the corpse of Cavendish was discovered on the banks of Simmer Water, and the preux-chevalier, Manners, dashed to pieces in flying from one of your escaped Scotch boys, the body of Sir Reginald Taunton was found, covered with bruises, in a river on the confines of Yorkshire. Thou seest that Maelstrom is not so ignorant of what concerneth the King of England as he deemed him to be."

"If I believed one word of what thou sayest, slave, only one of us should leave this place alive," the king said, his voice quivering, and his whole frame trembling with emotion.

"If what the *slave* hath told thee, John of England," Maelstrom said, "seem incredible and strange—what wilt thou think of that which remaineth behind? Not only is the Lady Ada alive, but the daughter of thine elder sister, the Lady Jean, also still liveth."

"Traitor and liar!" the king said, in a low voice, and approaching close to him—"Traitor and liar, thou meanest but to try me. If there were but a *tithe* of truth in all thou hast said;

if—if—nay, nay, 'tis folly—'tis madness! Yes if—"

Thus muttering, he retired nearly to the opening of the arbor, where he paced across again within his cage, ever and anon approaching Maelstrom, as if to try to read, even by the distinct light of the moon, what there might be of truth or falsehood in his countenance. Suddenly stopping in one of those promenades, he advanced to Maelstrom, who leaned against one of the trees which overshadowed the arbor, and said in a hollow tone of voice—

"Maelstrom, if thou hast fear of aught present or to come, tell me if there be aught of truth in what thou hast now said."

"Fears, King of England," Maelstrom said, "I have none. I have no cause of fear in the save from thee, if thou hadst the power while thou hast not. Call thy guards, and I will tell them that the cousin of the murdered Arthur still liveth, and that the son of Richard, King of England, liveth also, to dispute the crown with John of England himself, and with the children of Isabella d'Angoulême."

"Audacious, lying miscreant!" the king raising his arm as if to strike Maelstrom, who, observing the royal bosom laid open as it was by the action, lifted suddenly his own hand, and was in the act of bringing it down at planting a poniard, the blade of which glistened in the moonbeams, right into the heart of the king, when Macduff, who had been gradually but imperceptibly working himself through between the stems of two trees, threw himself between Maelstrom and the king, and parried the blow, receiving, however, a severe scratch on the face, as he threw upward the arm of the regicide.

Ere the king could recover his presence of mind, so suddenly and so rapidly had the event taken place, Maelstrom had glided from the arbor, and the search afterward made for him was in vain. He had, it was supposed, a master-key to the doors of the garden, and he easily effected his escape ere the guard could be summoned and receive the necessary instructions.

Macduff also tried to slip away without observation, but the king ordered the guards to secure him, and to bring him instantly along with him to the royal cabinet. On arriving there, and after all the attendants had been ordered out, the king said—

"By what chance, young man, thou, who I thought escaped beyond the borders, or Sir Reginald Taunton in the south, wert in the garden, I know not: nor boots it now to enquire. Thou hast saved the life of the King of England: that act hath saved thine own for a certainty, but for that, the silence of the tomb would have been the only fit place for secrets thou must have overheard this evening. But mark me, Scotchman, the possessor of secrets, be they false, as I believe them, or they true, has received a very weighty charge. There is but one way of avoiding the fate

over thy head with the knowledge thou obtained. I have observed that thou art devoid of shrewdness, and thou must see necessity for that which I now require of if life be to thee of any value. To him life thou hast saved, thou must now re-attached, and from his sight thou mayest for one moment roam. I will put thy fidelity to the test, by your leading me to-morrow ere Sir Henry de Hastings is now could be or lying sick, and from whence he hath been demanded my presence. Not one in reply. If thou serve me faithfully, is nothing in reason which the King of England will refuse thee; but let my suspicion be but once aroused, and thy life shall instantly be the price of thy infidelity. Enter at smaller cabinet within there, and await orders."

Macduff entered that closet, and, as he threw himself on one of the bishop's soft couches, he addressed himself—
"His, Macduff, comes o' burning your sin-
nither folk's kail. O dear me! if I had been as big as Adam Peebles, I never hae got into that infernal arbor, or if I had but the half o' his wit, I would hae got it by some ither way than wi' an escort king's body-guards."

CHAPTER XX.

THE WRECK.

a spacious chamber, hollowed out of the rock, on a humble couch, lay Sir Henry Hastings; but so changed from the knight had fretted the King of Scotland by his and lofty bearing, that few would have recognized the courtly cavalier in that emaciated and suffering form.

Far from him there sat a young page, in an elem-mourning dress of black velvet; his coun-
ce—the whole contour of his head, bust, and figure so exquisitely beautiful, that no de-
mon but that which Adam Peebles gave of
ady Anne of Sedbergh could be given of
and yet so like the lovely Deborah of the
n and Anchor, that the first words of De-
ngs, on awaking from his brief uneasy
er, were—

"Come back again to see the poor dying
t, my kind Deborah! Yet no," he add-
ising himself with difficulty, so as to ob-
a better view of the page, "this can not
 Deborah—and yet the likeness!"

"Call me still Deborah, Sir Henry; I shall
e so to thee, so long and as often as new-
to which I am called will permit me to
thy couch." See! I shall don this mantle
fasten this girdle, and thou wilt forget
thou hast seen me otherwise. It was
less of me not to have done so when
in, that thou mightest not have been
ed by a change which circumstances that

would not interest thee demand for a brief period."

"These circumstances, Deborah—for I must still call thee so—in changing thy position in life, as is evident to me from thy whole bearing, disappointed some of the schemes I was forming on this troubled couch. I have often thought—and was even now dreaming of it—what is it I can do to thank my kind nurse, whether I rise from this sad bed, or whether I die on it?"

"Set thy mind at rest, Sir Henry. It will ever be a source of consolation to me that fears for others induced me to follow my reputed uncle's steps and thine, so that thou wert not left entirely without attendance under such a dire mischance."

"And now," the knight said, "instead of having it in my power to acknowledge thy soothing aid, I shall have to ask new favors. What noise is that, Deborah?"

"Nothing, brave sir; it is only the wind which sighs through those desolate caves."

"Give me the potion, Deborah. Thou seest," he added with a melancholy smile, and raising himself up a little, "thou seest that I am an obedient patient, and forget not the orders of my physician. Deborah, if I die, let some one in whom thou hast confidence accompany thee to my lodgement, near the Blackfriars's Monastery in the town of Perth, in Scotland. I wish thee to go thyself, Deborah, and not to employ any but the confidential friend thou takest with thee, for there are papers there, Deborah—papers—thou understandest?"

"Do calm thyself, Sir Henry—thy wishes shall be obeyed. But speak of this afterward. Rest quietly now—do."

"No, Deborah," the knight answered; "there is something which tells me that now or never I must say this to thee. In the second chamber, thou wilt find an old cabinet—give the money to my servants; but the papers and parchments, Deborah, burn them—burn all! look not at one of them—burn—burn all! What is that, Deborah? I heard something more than the wind—it was a cry of distress! Go, Deborah—go, my kind nurse—see to that, and tell me."

Deborah, as we must still call her, looked out at the opening in the rock, which served for a casement.

"It is a storm, Sir Knight, a heavy storm which cometh hitherward, and the waves lash and howl among these strange rocks, as if they dreaded its approach. Oh, what a sight! Oh, Sir Henry de Hastings, couldst thou but rise to view this! such a rainbow—such a blackness within it, and such lightnings! Hark to the roar of these waves, as they rise and rush in among the rocks: there, again, they recede, carrying even some of the masses with them. Oh, Sir Knight, but this is fearful. There, again, they rise and lash over that huge rock, which seems like a fortress in the sea. Oh, merciful Heaven! what is that? A human be-

ing on that height calling for help! There he falls prostrate, as the spray lashes over him. But that lightning! I can look no longer—mine eyes are scorched with the glare.”

“Go again, Deborah, do, my good nurse. There is that cry again—the cry, too, of a woman or child. Look again, Deborah.”

“Ah! now there are two on the rock,” Deborah called out, as she again approached the opening; “there are two. I see the forms of a man and a woman. They will be lost; alas! the sea riseth more and more—ah! that wave!—Holy Virgin! it hath passed over them, and they are there still. Now they sink, and take shelter under that ledge of rock—now they are lost to view. Hear how the thunder rolls, Sir Knight, it shakes the very caves! Alas! for the poor cast-aways.”

Then turning quickly into the cavern, and approaching the couch of the invalid, she said, in great alarm—

“Sir Knight, I think I discern in one of those on the rock, the young man I told thee of, who followed Maelstrom the evening before I tracked thee to this spot.”

“It is strange, that the uncle of so good a girl as thou art,” Sir Henry said, with a bitter smile, “should be leagued with such a hell-hound as that Maelstrom. Good heavens! how it roars, and how those lightnings flash! Would that one,” he murmured to himself, “may strike both of those accursed villains.”

“What was that thou saidst, Sir Henry?”

“Nothing, Deborah, nothing: I but thought to myself that if Maelstrom were among the wretched beings on the rock, it would somewhat assuage the torments I suffer.”

“Oh, Sir Knight,” Deborah said, trembling, “speak not thus—Oh, speak not thus—it frightens me in this wild place.”

“Deborah,” Sir Henry said—and he raised himself with a desperate effort on his arm, while he glared on the alarmed young woman; “Deborah—if I but dared to tell thee what my fears are of what that man hath done, and who they are that I suspect to be on that rock—thou wouldst join thy prayers with my curses, that the bolts of heaven were let loose on his devoted head!”

He sank back exhausted, apparently lifeless; but the bathing of his temples, by the trembling hands of his now thoroughly affrighted attendant, brought him back to consciousness. He did not attempt to speak, but pointed again to the casement. Deborah went, and shading her eyes with her hand, said—

“The fire from the skies is not quite so scorching, and the rain falls in torrents. I see not the people on the rock. The sea is quieter too. It hath arisen high above the lower passages among the rocks, so that many of those fearful chasms and gulfs are filled, and it lies groaning and surging, as if exhausted by its own efforts. What is that I see? A ship coming near the coast, and turning the point as if from Shields or Newcastle—it is that stranger

ship—that beautiful vessel which lay at the quay, and in which Maelstrom and those poor women came. They must be strangers to this part of the coast to approach so near it, at this time; but, above all, in such weather, and with a storm from the east. Yet it is not ignorant guides that helm!—how it glides in and out among those narrow passages! It is lost to view. There it rises again. Now they strive to stand out to sea, but the tide carries them nearer and nearer to land. Oh, what a billow meets them, as they again try to stand out—it strikes them—they are lost! No; there the vessel emerges again out of the surf—there riseth aloft—and now, the saints keep them—they are among the needles. Yet they hold on—they come hitherward. They are behind the first reef of rocks—would they but rest there they might be safe; but no, they still advance they direct their course toward the rocky coast here. There they are, turned by the tide—the billow will engulf them! No; it is most wonderful! That vessel either ventures madly on unknown dangers, and escapes them by miracle, or it is directed by skillful hands, and sailon accustomed to this coast. See, the heavens become clearer; but the wind rises again. Hear, Sir Knight, how it howls! That wave! oh, it is awful—see, it flies high over the rock—I feel its spray even here: the vessel rises higher and higher—she is lost!”

And Deborah turned with a shriek from the opening. Recovering a little from the shock, she approached the couch of the knight. He was still faint and exhausted; but he whispered—

“Go again, kind Deborah, tell me if the vessel still weathers the storm. Tell me, if thou canst, what passeth on board.”

She returned again to the casement, where, holding up her hands, she exclaimed—

“It is there still: it is now close to the great mass over-against us here. There must be those on board who bear a charmed life. They call to those on the rock. Gracious heaven! who is that directing the steersman? Mine eyes deceive me if it be not—oh, this is fearful—preserve me—preserve me, all the saints!”—and she sank on her knees below the casement.

“What is it, Deborah?” Hastings uttered so feebly that she did not seem to have heard him—he cried again, rather more audibly. “Come hither, my good Deborah, and tell me what thou hast seen.”

She arose and approached the knight, but she essayed in vain to speak.

“For Heaven’s sake, Deborah, what hast thou seen?”

“I dare not, I dare not tell thee,” she replied, shuddering.

“Nay,” he said, “fear not to tell me. I am now prepared for the worst. Thou canst tell me nothing more terrible than I am prepared for.”

“I saw, Sir Henry de Hastings, I saw—thy-

self," and again she sank on her knees, and hid her face on the couch.

The knight groaned, and for some time spoke not; at last he said—

"I had prepared myself for this, my good girl: from this couch I knew well I never should see. I wanted but this assurance of my fate. A cometh," he added, in a hollow voice, "to all of our family. Go again, Deborah, if thou must, and tell me what thou seest."

Again she repaired to the casement.

"The vessel is still there: it seems moored to the rock; but it reels fearfully. And there, there," she cried out, "are the people still on the rock. Oh, Sir Henry, Sir Henry—one of them is the young woman whom Maelstrom brought to my father's house, and the other is—the person I supposed. And he—he—that is," and she shuddered—"the knight is signing to them to descend and to go on board. That lady beside him signeth also—"

"What lady, Deborah?"

"Oh, what a majestic air!" she murmured; "nay, it is herself, it is herself! 'Together they sail to those on the rock—they refuse.' Then more audibly: 'Oh, how the vessel rocks and the billows roar!—it is driven off. Again it draws near, again they sign, again they refuse! How he rageth! He essays to land—he hath seized a rope; the vessel is carried aloft—it creaks—it descends—'"

And a wail from without, so wild, so piercing, so harrowing, arose, that Deborah started back from the casement; and the knight, groaning, shut his eyes, as if to exclude something horrible from his view.

The cry was repeated once and again, but more feebly each time; and Deborah, gathering courage, again drew near the point of observation, and again partly murmured to herself and partly called out—

"The vessel hath disappeared. Ah! there are pieces of it among the billows, and poor wretches clinging to them. There are three on that mast—she is one of them; she stretches one arm upward, as if imploring the aid of Heaven, with the other she clings to the mast. Oh, how heavenly! Alas! they are driven among these sharp rocks; the mast strikes them—they are driven off—they are lost! Sir Henry, I dare look no longer." She was turning, when she called out—"But see, the two persons on the rock are still there, and safe, Heaven be praised! Who is that on a part of the wreck there? It is—it is"—and in a low tone of voice—"it is that dread figure in armor. The weight of the armor seems to carry him down; he sinks—no, there again he riseth on the waves. How he fights with the billows! He looks hitherward—ye saints and virgins! it is—"

"Who, Deborah, who?" the knight said, making an effort to rise.

"Maelstrom!" Deborah replied, and Sir Henry sank back again on his couch. In a few moments he rallied, and said—

"Look again, Deborah; is he still there?"

"He is still there," she answered; "but he hath turned, and is now making for the large rock. His strength is giving way; he hath ceased his hold of the plank—he is carried aloft on a wave—he sinks—he is gone! Oh, Sir Henry, is this a vision, or is it real?"

The strength of Lady Anne gave way, and she fell back on the sandy floor of the cavern.

"I am no quite sure if I do right to come in here without an invitation, but it's no an afternoon to stand on muckle ceremony," was heard from the other end of the cave, and the bulky form of Adam Peebles, in his bowman's dress, was seen filling up the narrow entrance. Advancing a little way, he added—

"This is a strange sight in sic a place—a woman lying near the window, and a man on a settle, baith looking mair dead than alive!" Then going up first to Deborah—"And a bonnie lassie, too—my gudeness! if it binna the Leddie Anne o' Sedbergh hersel! Leddie Anne! Leddie Anne! look up—"

"Hush, hush," she said, beginning to revive, and looking anxiously toward the couch of the sick knight, who, however, moved not—"utter not that name again here; here I am, plain Deborah. But how and why art thou here, Adam Peebles? Speak only in a whisper."

"I left Durham in search o' a stravaigin' freend o' mine, that left me last night. I took refuge frae that awfu' storm aneth ane o' the big rocks hereabouts, and dandering about, I fell in wi' this chamber—little thinking to find any living thing in sic a hole, and here there are twa! But wha is that sick-looking callant on the couch there? Do my een no deceive me? It's Sir Henry de Hastings; but, poor man, he's sair fa'n aff sin' I saw him last. Tam said something about a clour on the head, but I didna look for any thing o' this kind." Then moving gently toward the couch, he said, in a soft tone of voice, which one would not have expected from his generally loud manner of speaking—

"Sir Henry de Hastings, I am excessively sorry, sorry indeed to see ye in this situation. Is there any thing I can do for ye?"

The knight opened his eyes, and recognizing Adam, thanked him by his looks, but did not at first attempt to reply. By-and-by he said, although with difficulty—

"Where is thy master, Adam?"

"Indeed, Sir Henry," Adam replied, "it is mair than I can say. He was on his way to see you twa or three days syne; he slipped out o' my hands some way or other by the road, and whar he has gane bellwaving is mair than I can tell."

"But how," Sir Henry whispered, "did he know I was here?"

"A bit lassie spoke to him on the streets o' Hexham, wha got her information frae yer ain servant Macduff. Sir Robert didna ken, I believe, that it was you he was coming to see. She just told him to set off for the Crown and Anchor in Newcastle, and for Marsden Rocks;

but she didna say why nor wherefor. We had come as far as Corbridge, and there, when stopping to rest the maigs frae the heat o' the day, he went out to walk and never came back. But what noise is that I hear? somebody calling for help? There are some people on the rocks," he said softly to the lady, as he approached the window; "but it's getting dusk, and I canna see very distinctly."

"Yes," Lady Anne said, "there are a young man and a girl there. The young man is a countryman of your own, I think. I wish there were any way of assisting them."

"A countryman o' mine! Does your leddyship ken his name?"

"Malcom Beg, I believe."

"Malcom Beg!" Adam exclaimed; "how in the name o' a' that's strange has he got there? That chield was aye getting himsel' into some scrape or ither, but this dings them a'."

"I shall tell thee," the Lady Anne said, "all I know of him, or of this place in very few words, for I must be off on the instant to Newcastle. Thou canst remain, I hope, and may be of service to thy countryman, and to the poor English knight here, who, I fear, is dying. In the morning I may perhaps return."

"A very mysterious person," the lady continued, "called Maelstrom, who seemed to be the leader of a band of lawless traders, of which these caves were the resort, brought with him hither some years since a lady of exceeding beauty, and whom I now know to have been the Lady, or rather the Princess, Ada, with whose history thou art acquainted. She had in charge two boys and a girl. The girl was myself—left with the wife of Michael Plummer, one of the band, and the keeper of the principal inn in Newcastle, where I was introduced as their niece. Within these few days the Princess Ada took me to Yorkshire and Westmoreland to put me in possession of estates, bought, they say, with my mother's money; but who that mother was they have not told me. The estates were bought and nursed by Maelstrom, under the name of the Knight of Sedbergh; and, whatever his conduct as the leader of the contrabandists may have been, in the character I have mentioned he was greatly respected, and toward me hath acted most faithfully and honorably: only he did not inform me of my parentage, and hath required that I wear the disguise thou sawest me in, and which is now underneath this cloak, until, he said, I had put myself under the protection of the King of Scots, when my birth would be revealed. Adam Peebles, thou wilt hear with deep sorrow that I saw this afternoon the Princess Ada clinging to the mast of a vessel wrecked among these rocks, and engulfed among the raging billows. It was that heart-rending scene which threw me into the stupor in which thou didst find me here, and which yet unnerves me."

"Wae's me," Adam sighed, and a tear stood in his manly eye, "but that was a sad end for *sic a life o' persecution and sorrow!*"

"But, Adam, in the wreck of the same vessel this Maelstrom, I think, also perished. Of this I am not certain, for at the moment when he appeared to be sinking, one of these rocks hid him from my view; but what it chiefly concerns thee to know is, that before the ship was broken, Maelstrom made great efforts to induce Malcom Beg and his companion to go on board, which they refused to do. Now the whole of the mystery, in which the scenes which these rocks have witnessed within these few days, originated with Maelstrom bringing two women, who had come with him by that very vessel from Scotland, to the Crown and Anchor—his being seized as a suspected person by a party of Scotch troops—his escaping during the night with the women, and his being watched and followed at my desire by Malcom Beg, who, doubtless, was discovered by Maelstrom, seized, and left with the younger woman on that rock. The elder female, I suspect, was the Lady Ada. The night following, Michael Plummer went with Sir Henry de Hastings here in search of Maelstrom; I followed them with your friend Macduff, and by a private passage, which I had known formerly, when, as a child, I joined along with Mary Wilson, Robert, and Godfrey, in our youthful sports in these caves. I arrived in time to administer to the wound of Sir Henry, who was shot in the dark by an arrow, I fear, poisoned, and directed—I shudder to say it—by the hand of Maelstrom."

"I beg your pardon, my leddie," Adam said, looking a little soft; "ye have mentioned a Mary Wilson—may I speir whar she cam frae?"

"From Durham," Lady Anne replied.

"Weel, that's queer enough," Adam said, his sheepishness still increasing; "I may say that lassie was the cause of my coming here. To tell ye the truth, my leddie, it wasna to see King John, nor to obey Lady Ada's wishes, Tam and I returned to Durham—it was to see Mary. We baith had a weak side toward the lassie, though, like true Scotchmen, we didna say a word about it to ane anither. Weel, Macduff, wha was put aff his eggs a bit when he saw Mary and me rather couthy thegither—gaes out at the window, and never comes in again. Whether he had come back, and seeing Mary and me crackin', he didna like to interrupt us, I diinna ken; but no seeing him again, and kennin' that he was a bit anxious to see what was gaun on at Marsden Rocks, I cam here to inquire after him."

"I am much pleased to hear, Adam, that Mary has made so good a choice; and I wish you joy of having the prospect of so worthy a helpmate. She is a good girl, and a merry companion. She has kept her word, for always on her return from Stagshawbank, or Morpeth fairs, she said she would, some day or other, choose a Scotchman for a sweetheart—there was something so honest-like both in their looks and speech."

"I hae aye thought," Adam rejoined, almost blushing, "that there was great truth in the

saying, "That as the fining-pot is for silver, so is a man to his praise—I am aye clean shameit whan I'm praised to my face—but in this case, it would appear that Mary at first took us baith for our nationality; and me, secondly, for my personality."

"That is too deep a question for the south side of the Tweed, Adam; and, besides, time presses. I will say good-night to Sir Henry, whom I shall endeavor to see again in the morning. Thou wilt find, on the left of the entrance of the cave, a way to the part of the rocks from whence thou mayest communicate with Malcom Beg."

When Adam stood on the ledge of rock, to which the sea only reached in spray from the still angry waves, he called out—

"Hallo, there! you on the rock."

For some time there were only returned the echoes of his calls. Ere long, however, the two figures were visible above.

"Is that you, Malcom Beg?"

"Yes," was the answer; "wha are you?"

"Adam Peebles. Tak care o' yoursels there; I am gaun to try if I can throw a stane your length. Ye havena ony string there, I reckon? bat I'll try if I can find some on this side of the water."

In searching for the cord, Adam discovered some of the hidden stores of the caves, with the extent of which he was not a little astonished. On his return, he threw a stone to the top of the rocky castle, which alighted just at Malcom's feet. To the next he attached the cord, previously let out on the rock, which went up, as he said, "wi' a fine sough," and alighted nearly at the same spot.

"Now Malcom, tie it firm there to some projecting part of the rock. I shall send up twa or three questions, which I dinna like to ask loud out; and then we'll see the morn if we can get a stronger cable."

The first question Adam sent up was—

"Wha's that wi' ye on the rock?"

The answer returned was—

"That's telling."

The next question was—

"Will ye come down, and across here, if I can find out the means?"

The answer was—

"No, I wunna."

The third and last question was—

"What is there, then, I can do for ye?"

The answer was—

"Send somebody—either a Scotchman or a trusty Northumbrian—wi' a boat to the ither side o' the rock."

"Gude-night, Malcom."

"Gude-night, and thanks to ye, Adam."

The latter spent the evening partly in administering to the wants of the wounded knight, partly in reflecting over all that had passed, and in endeavoring to expound to his own satisfaction the answers he had received from the rock, which only became the more dark the longer he cogitated.

At last, as he was arranging the skins on his couch, and was preparing to lie down, he half murmured half thought to himself, that the only safe conclusion he could arrive at in the present state of matters was, in the words of his mother, that "the langer we live, we see the mair ferlies."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE THREE KNIGHTS.

IN the direction of the west gate of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and not far from the opening of the street toward the Church of St. Nicholas, there stood a building of no great extent toward the thoroughfare, but somewhat eccentric in its architectural appearance. A Gothic porch projected in front of its ample doorway, and above that porch a balcony of heavy masonry connected externally two fantastic turrets formed of black oak, placed diagonally, and the interstices filled up with light-colored bricks. A stone, with some pretensions to carving, fixed by iron stanchions above the ornamental stone balustrade of the balcony, and tied as it seemed at the corners with bright brass ribbons, indicated that the house within was the *Wool-pack*, second only in renown to the *Crown and Anchor*, now a heap of smoking embers, as a house of call, of refreshment, and of lodging. In the latter respect, it had more than rivaled its extinct competitor, for although the front was narrow, the buildings extended a considerable way behind, forming three sides of an extensive square, or yard, to which there was access also from another, although less frequented thoroughfare.

The fourth side of the square was shut in by a part of an adjoining house, which also was somewhat remarkable for its external arrangements. It stood at the corner of the street, its principal front looking toward the Church of Saint Nicholas. That front was composed entirely of wood and bricks, in rows of alternate diamonds and Vandykes, which, above each of the four large oriel windows, terminated in open wood-work, forming balustrades for so many balconies. The street-front—that which adjoined the *Wool-pack*—was of heavy masonry, stone corbels of very elaborate workmanship supporting a gallery similar to and on the same level with the balcony of the *Wool-pack*.

In the yard of that inn, seated on one of the projecting parapets which inclosed the steps conducting to the various doors which opened into the court, a young cavalier, with only a part of his armor buckled on, sat surveying very attentively the windows of the larger mansion, which looked into the court. His gaze was on the windows, but his thoughts were absent and his looks sad. So abstracted was he, that he did not observe the entrance into the yard of another knight in full panoply, until the latter laid his hand rather smartly on his shoulder.

"Why, how now, Godfrey, art thou still stupefied with the flames and smoke of the inn? What ails thee, man? If it had not been for thy sunny locks, I would scarcely have recognized in thee my merry entrapper of Et-trick Forest."

"Ah! it is thou, Moredun—welcome!" Godfrey replied mechanically, without removing his eyes for an instant from the windows of the corner house, "thou art right welcome. But what hath detained thee?"

Moredun narrated to him the adventures of the preceding day, save the incident of the hermitage; but observing that, if Godfrey heard the words, his air was still as abstracted as ever, and that his eyes were never removed from the same window, he added—

"But, Godfrey, what aileth thee? Hast thou indeed suffered from thine act of noble self-devotion?"

"I have suffered, indeed, Moredun, but in a way thou little dreamest of. Listen!—but stand aside, that, while I speak, I may not lose sight of those windows. After I burst open the door, I ascended by a small staircase which I had known formerly, and which the flames had not yet reached—that must be her!" he exclaimed, starting up and rushing into the inn.

Moredun followed him more leisurely, fearing much that his young friend had received a blow or some injury about the head, which had produced a temporary aberration of intellect. He passed through the house, and went out into the street without finding him. When on the street, he looked up to see if he appeared at any of the windows, and there he was, on the balcony at the end next the corner house, leaning over and gazing intently toward the windows there, as he had done toward those which faced the court.

Seriously alarmed, Moredun returned into the inn, where he called to a girl, whom he supposed to be a domestic, and who was ascending the interior staircase. He was a good deal surprised when she turned, to recognize in her the young woman who had spoken to him on the street at Hexham. She knew him again at once, colored a little, and courtesied very low.

"I did not expect to see thee here, my pretty informant."

"Nor I thee, Sir Knight; I hope thy servant knoweth of thy safety."

"I have been detained by sickness, my good girl, and have not yet had the time or opportunity to inquire after him. But pray, canst thou tell me who liveth in the adjoining house, that at the corner here?"

"It was an old knight lived there formerly, Sir Cavalier; but I believe he is dead. It is some time since I was in Newcastle. I have only come this morning to see my aunt here, who is married to the landlord, and I know little of the town: I shall inquire of her, however."

"Do, my good girl; but show me first the way to the balcony in front of the house—I

have a friend there who requires watching I fear."

Mary led him through one of the rooms to a window which opened on the gallery, and went to make the promised inquiry. Godfrey was still in the position Moredun saw him in from the street—a position calculated in no small degree to excite attention of the passengers, who were beginning to collect in a little knot on the opposite side. It required almost some degree of violence on the part of Moredun, to drag him from his singular point of observation into the adjoining room.

"Godfrey, my friend," he said, "tell me what it is that aileth thee? What is it interests and agitates thee so much?"

"Forgive me, Moredun," Godfrey replied; "I have allowed my selfish feelings to carry me beyond what is due to thee—perhaps even what is due to myself. But listen ere you condemn me. I had mounted the staircase of the Crown and Anchor, as I told you, and gained entrance into the room, at the window of which the young man had appeared. He had fallen on the bed, apparently almost suffocated by the smoke and the heat, as the flames were appearing through a part of the floor. I took him up, and by the light of the flames, subdued as it was by the smoke, it was impossible to avoid seeing that I had in my arms not a young man, but a young woman; and of a loveliness—oh, Moredun! if it was too much almost to look on her, inanimate and pale, and with her eyelids closed—what was it when she afterward opened her eyes to look thanks to her deliverer? I am foolish, I believe; but you will pardon me if we but see her again."

"Well, but where didst thou take her—where hast thou left her?"

"Ay, that it is which distracts me. I carried my precious burden to a neighboring house, and where she was in some degree restored to consciousness ere I left her. I returned twice afterward, and was told both times that she was enjoying sound repose. When I went this morning, I was informed that she had gone out very early, none knew whither. Fool! dolt! idiot that I was, ever to have thought of sleep myself. I thought I twice had a glimpse of her face in the adjoining house this morning—it was but fancy, I believe."

Mary here entered; but when she saw Godfrey, she stopped short in something she began to say about her aunt, stammered, and gazed at the young knight.

"Mary Wilson!" Godfrey exclaimed, running up to her and taking her in his arms, "art thou here? I am right glad to see thee again."

The blushing girl withdrew herself from his embrace, saying—

"Indeed, Master Godfrey, I thought I knew thy face; but thou art so grown—and so—" here she blushed again, and could not proceed.

"What sayeth thine aunt, Mary?" Moredun asked, desirous to say something to relieve her from her embarrassment.

"She sayeth, Sir Knight, that the noble lord who lived in the adjoining house died lately, and that a young heir hath arrived; but he hath not yet been seen by any one, neither doth she know his name."

"Mary—since that is your name, and you seem to be a friend of Sir Godfrey here—do, like a good lass, obtain all the information you can as to this against our return. We have affairs of importance before us for the day. Come, Godfrey, arouse thee; don the rest of thine armor, and let us to horse. In the evening thou mayest continue thine inquiries with better success."

Godfrey did rouse himself: he was soon ahorse, and on the road to Marsden Rocks with his friend; but he continued gloomy and abstracted, in spite of all Moredun's efforts to interest him, either by dwelling on the events of the previous day, or with anticipations of what might be awaiting them on the coast of Durham. The knight of Moredun awoke the knight of the Star at last, by remarking—

"For a knight of romance in search of a shadow, that was not a bad reality thou took'st in thine arms so warmly this morning, Godfrey."

"Moredun!"

"Pardon me, my dreamy friend, if I was pleased to see that any thing could withdraw thee from thy sad musings, nor refrain from smiling when I observed that a real woman was the only cure for the absence of—I will not say an imaginary one, but at least of one seen and met with under circumstances calculated to render her portrait on thine heart an imaginary one rather than a good likeness."

"Moredun," Godfrey replied, somewhat piqued, "I must not take offense, I suppose, at any thing thou sayest; but pardon me if I venture to hint in reply, that if thou didst not lose thy mistress yesterday after saving her life, as I did mine, and art not therefore able to enter fully into my feelings, it is, to say the least of it, ungenerous as well as mistimed to indulge in such pleasantries. Nay," he added, with a gesture of impatience, seeing that Sir Robert was about to reply, "nay, pardon me, I have somewhat more to say. That good and honest young woman, the meeting unexpectedly with whom withdrew my thoughts for a moment from what now harasses me, was your companion as well as mine in our childhood, although the glare of a court seems to have blotted out, with thee, the remembrance of humbler scenes."

"What meanest thou, Godfrey?"

"I mean, Robert de Moredun, that when we were children, we lived together in the caverns of the rocks to which we are now journeying. Thou wert taken away some years before me, and while still very young; at the same time, not quite such an infant, I have often thought, as to have left no trace on thy remembrance of the pretty Deborah and the lively Mary, who were the companions of our youthful sports."

Moredun was about to reply, when, from the

spot to which they had attained, near the junction of two cross roads, they observed, rounding a hillock, which had hitherto hid them from their view, and approaching the junction of the roads, a knight in black armor, with his visor closed, followed by two squires or attendants.

"Let us close our visors, Sir Robert," Godfrey said; "the unknown there has shut his. It is only a necessary precaution in a desolate part of the country like this, where the presence of a man so armed, and so accompanied, is at least singular, if not suspicious—he seems to think the same of us."

The knight in black had reined in his horse, and sent forward one of the attendants.

"My master, the Black Knight, desireth to know of you, Sir Cavaliers, if ye can direct him to the rocks of Marsden, which ought to be somewhere in this neighborhood?"

Godfrey, who had not recovered his equanimity, replied, sharply—

"When thy master sendeth us his name and title, we shall send him our reply."

The squire returned and reported Godfrey's words to the Black Knight, who now advanced at a brisk pace, and made up to them just as they were crossing at the junction of the roads.

"Did my squire bring me your answer correctly, Sir Knights," he asked, "when he reported that my name and title are demanded ere an answer be returned to the inquiry I made?"

Godfrey started on hearing the voice, and said, in a whisper to Moredun—

"Leave it to me to reply—say not a word." Then addressing the Black Knight—"If the squire had asked the question in his own name, we should have given him the information he had desired, because he asked it with open face and undisguised. When he asked it for another—we reply not to veiled countenances, which imply veiled designs."

"The answer toucheth thyself, Sir Knight," he in black replied; "thou and thy companion journey incognito also."

"Our visors answered to thine, mysterious Sir," the Knight of the Star rejoined; "our arms attest that we belong to ranks which walk by the light of heaven—by night as well as at noonday," alluding to his own motto, *Astra Castra*, and to Moredun's, *Nunnen Launen*.

"I pretend not to read the stars," the Black Knight replied, with a sneer.

"When the sun sinks untimely, the stars may be seen and read of all," Godfrey answered.

"I am no reader of riddles, Sir Jester," the Black Knight said, sharply.

"But art thyself a notable one," Godfrey retorted.

"Rather beyond thy reading, young Sir."

"It hath been long known to me."

"Thou must have begun the study at an early age, and under able instructors, Sir Knight of the Star."

"I learned it in a manner to fix it well on

the youthful memory," Godfrey answered. "I have studied it in verse."

"The bards are generally flatterers," the Black Knight remarked.

"Thou canst judge of that thyself in this case—Blondel was my tutor."

"How now, young Sir?" the Black Knight exclaimed, suddenly checking his steed.

While this parry and thrust exercise of words had been going on, all the three knights had been advancing together at a quick pace; the Black Knight a little behind the two others, and the two squires following at some distance. They were now within sight of Marsden Rocks, which lay immediately below them; they were, in fact, on the top of one of them, and nearly opposite the castellated mass, on the summit of which a girl and a soldier seemed to be watching some operations which Adam Peebles was carrying on on the shore below. Moredun was the first who stopped, and, regardless of the gestures of Godfrey, who signed to him to maintain silence, he turned toward the Black Knight, saying—

"Methinks, Sir Unknown, that this play of words, which, in truth, I have not comprehended, hath gone on long enough. We are now, I can perceive, at the rocks, which, it is evident, are the object of our several expeditions. Why you seek them, Sir Knight, it is not for me to inquire. After my companion and I have prosecuted the business which brought us here, the path will be open to thee. At present we admit of no companion—least of all one who is nameless."

"Stand back, Sir Knight; I permit no one to dispute my passage," the Black Knight said, haughtily.

"It is I who have been the disputer hitherto. Allow me the honor of carrying it on," Godfrey said. "Read me the riddle aright, Sir Knight, by now unclasp thy visor, or, by heavens! I will read it aloud myself from the top of these rocks."

"Stand aside, idle jester!" the Black Knight answered, spurring on his horse toward the top of the path; "I deal with men, not with children."

"A man, then, awaits thee," Moredun said, placing his horse across the path; "it is only over my body that thou canst descend from this point."

"Stand back, again I say, insolent upstart!"

"Defend thee, then, haughty intruder!" Moredun replied, reining back his steed, and placing his lance in the rest. Godfrey was turning his horse so as to keep the squires in view and in check, when the Black Knight, in retreating a few paces and turning his lance ere placing it in rest, struck the Knight of the Star, so suddenly and so severely, that he was unhorsed.

Not seeming to regard or to think of what he had done, the Black Knight couched his lance at the same moment with Moredun, and the two combatants at the same instant rushed toward each other, and met at the top of the disputed

path, which led by a gentle slope down toward the rocks.

The encounter was tremendous. The lance of the Black Knight was shattered to pieces on the shield of Moredun, whose lance, striking the helmet of his adversary on the crest, forced it off, and sent its wearer over the crupper of his horse to the ground.

Moredun, instantly dismounting, drew his sword and rushed toward the prostrate knight; but started back on beholding at his feet—John, King of England.

At the same moment, Maelstrom, habited in the armor of Sir Henry de Hastings, but without the helmet, stepped out from behind one of many rocks which abutted on the path, exclaiming—

"Son of Richard the Lion-hearted! rid the world of the vacillating tyrant."

But the words were no sooner pronounced than Moredun dropped on one knee beside the fallen monarch; while Godfrey, maddened by the insult he had received, rushed toward the adversary whom he had unhorsed the previous day, and seized him by the throat, calling out—

"Ah, dissimulating coward! thou shalt not escape from me now, as thou didst from the lists of Alnwick;" but at that moment Adam Peebles, who had witnessed the arrival of the cavalcade, and had instantly begun the ascent of the path, at the top of which he arrived almost breathless, threw himself between Godfrey and Maelstrom, exclaiming in his turn—

"Would you throttle your ain father, ye wild loon?"

Then running toward the two squires, one of whom he had for some time discerned to be Macduff, he said to the other—

"Fly to assist your master!"

And added something to Tom, finishing with, "And if ever ye had ony smeddum about you, exercise it now;" upon which that prisoner of state, glad to be emancipated, turning his horse, rode off at a brisk pace, and Adam joined the principal group.

The situation of all the parties at the top of the path was now sufficiently embarrassing. None of them could entirely credit the information regarding their relationship, so suddenly and so singularly conveyed to them; yet none of them could altogether convince himself that it was untrue. There lay an uncle, humbled by a nephew, now kneeling at his side, of whose very existence he had had doubts, and from whom, if he still lived, he had had reason to look for anything rather than the submission and loyalty he now manifested; and there stood a son, who had been in mortal conflict, ignorantly, with his own father, and who had been on the verge of sacrificing him to what he considered his just resentment, if he had not been deterred by the strange words uttered by Adam Peebles.

The king was, as usual, the first to recover his presence of mind, as he rose from his recumbent position.

"Sir Knight," he said, addressing Moredun, "although the words thou hast heard uttered are the words of one who hath been habitually a deceiver, yet they would have justified a very different conduct on thy part from the noble and—I will, I must say it—the princely course thou hast chosen. Stand up, Robert le Noble, now an English knight, created on English land. The King of England offers thee his hand, and never shall it be lifted against thee, wert thou even to prefer the claims of which that dotard dreameth, and were they even as true as I believe them to be fictitious. Young knight," turning to Godfrey, "thy riddle is solved. If it hath been prefaced somewhat roughly, be content that it was the hand of a king which sent thee from studying the stars, to learn more prudence on the earth, and to take thy portraits of kings from experience of their power and clemency, rather than from the ballads of wandering minstrels. They say," turning to Adam, "that Sir Henry de Hastings is somewhere near us here—canst thou conduct us to him? Oh!" he added, looking closely at Adam, as the Scotchman knelt before him before turning to lead the way, "another of the escaped? By the body of my father! but Marsden Rocks are rich in runaways."

"Yes, your Majesty," Adam murmured as he rose, "they have aye been famous for illeccit merchandeeze."

"Peace, varlet, and lead the way!" was the answer, although the remark was too palatable not to be rewarded by a royal smile, from which Adam judged, as he afterwards said, that "the sooner he made himself scarce the better, for the smiles o' King John were weel kent to be weathergaws."

Godfrey was too much interested and occupied with what passed between the king and Moredun, to observe that his opponent in the lists—that dreaded and suspected individual, who had now been introduced to him as his own father—had disappeared. With a strange mixture of feelings, which he dared not analyze, he felt relieved by his absence; and yet, after telling Moredun that he would follow them in a very short time, he spent a full half hour in a vain search for Maelstrom among the rocks.

In the course of this search, he had descended gradually to the beach, where the gently-rising tide was bearing, every now and then, some relic of the ill-fated vessel to the shore. He was stretching forward to lay hold of something which resembled a casket or jewel-box, when his attention was attracted by a white mass, which, at some depth in the water, was also gradually approaching him. Ere long, he was convinced that it was a human body in a white garment. With the help of his spear, he drew it ashore; and there, pale as marble, and more beautiful than any form which sculptor e'er chiselled or fancy drew, he beheld lying before him the lady who had brought himself and Moredun to these caverns in their childhood.

Drawing the body to a flat rock, to which the

tide could not reach, he disposed the white robe in graceful folds over it, and entered the caverns in search of his friend—under an emotion so deep, as to partake almost of the character of devotion—every irritated feeling of the morning subdued, and under subjection to the workings of an unseen but Almighty hand.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CAVERNS.

KING JOHN entered with measured steps the cavern where Sir Henry de Hastings lay, surveying first, with wonder, the strange chamber, and then fixing his troubled and anxious gaze on the couch of his sick and, as his first glance told him, his dying favorite.

He was advancing softly toward the sufferer, and about to address him, when, from a small portal at the upper end of the cave, the Lady Anne, in her habiliments as a page, advanced also to the couch, and stood at the opposite side of it, fronting the king, ere she observed the new visitors to the sick-chamber, both of whom were unknown to her.

At the sight of this unexpected vision, the king drew back some paces, and became deadly pale.

"Deborah, my kind and gentle nurse, thou art ever true to thy word," De Hastings exerted himself to say; "thou didst not expect to meet the King of England here to-day."

Lady Anne, in her turn, blanched, and the king, reassured, advanced.

"Thou hast found at least a charming nurse, Sir Henry," he said, with a sneer.

"King of England!" Moredun interposed, advancing at the same time on the other side of the couch toward the Lady Anne.

"Knight of Moredun," the king said, waving his hand, as if motioning Sir Robert back, who, however, kept his place at the side of the lady—"Knight of Moredun, we asked not thine interference."

"I would be unworthy of the name now pronounced, and of the title so lately conferred by your Majesty, if I waited a command when a lady is attacked," Moredun replied, haughtily.

"Here," John rejoined, "thou art privileged and safe."

"As I was, and as your Majesty knoweth, ere I entered. What was said in irony to me, ought to be said in earnest to this lady," Moredun replied.

"Even in that dress," the king added, with additional acrimony.

"My gracious Sovereign," Hastings interposed, breathing hard, and speaking with great difficulty—then, observing Lady Anne, after looking her thanks to Moredun, about to retire, "Deborah, my ever kind and good nurse, wilt thou once more give me the potion?"

She glided at once to the buffet, in which the vials stood, poured out some, and, kneeling

beside the couch, held it to the parched lips of the dying knight.

"My gracious Sovereign," Hastings now said more audibly and firmly, "if there be in all thy dominions one who is entitled to respect and honor, it is her whom prosperity hath not spoiled, but who is even now ready as when she was the humble Deborah, to wait upon and to soothe the couch of him who had no claims on her tender care, but that he suffered."

"And now that she is no longer the humble Deborah, by what name, or by what title, are we now to salute and to do honor to thy page, Sir Henry? as the Lady de Hastings?" The king said this with great bitterness.

"King John, even a monarch"—Moredun began; but the Lady Anne, rising and motioning him to silence, thus with great dignity addressed the king—

"Monarch of England, ere I tell thee by what title I, thy liege subject, claim the protection of this Scottish knight against insults, which even the sick couch of thine own favorite can not avert, let me, still in the character of his humble nurse, bear witness to the patience with which he hath borne his sufferings—to serve him, and wait on him, hath been a service more than repaid by his gentle bearing—and oh! if indeed the poison hath done its work, and he rise not again from his couch of sickness, assure his gracious mother, the Princess of Aquitaine, that he sustained his afflictions as became a Christian knight and a soldier."

The sufferer looked anxiously and amazedly, first at the Lady Anne and then toward the king.

"Who," King John demanded, trembling with rage, "who hath dared to speak of the Princess of Aquitaine as the mother of Sir Henry de Hastings?"

"Those who know thee well, and all thou doest, John Lackland," Maelstrom exclaimed, as a part of the rock opened, and that dreaded individual stood before them.

The King and Moredun both recoiled before the unexpected apparition; and ere they could recover their presence of mind, Maelstrom had taken the hand of the Lady Anne, and led her toward the opening, shutting it after them, as he proclaimed in a loud voice—

"The Lady Anne of Sedbergh had taken this disguise, because the time had not yet arrived for proclaiming her to be the daughter of thy sister, the Lady Jean of Anjou."

For some moments the king and the knight of Moredun stood petrified and rooted to the spot.

"Another of those scenes"—the king at last gasped out while affecting to smile—"which that charlatan hath always in readiness to cross my path with. Sir Henry," he added, going toward de Hastings, and taking his hand, "I was to blame in sending that traitor to thine aid in Scotland. Thy sovereign, Sir Henry, hath come hither, not to receive thy confessions, but to make them; and I will now confess to thee,

that in what that page, who is now called to act the part of a princess, hath said, there is at least a portion of the truth. I came hither to reveal that truth; and I have that to explain with respect to thy parentage, which I wish the Knight of Moredun also to hear—step nearer, Sir Robert—because, while the concealment of it from thyself was an act, however politic I judged it on my part, which now prevents me standing here as thine accuser, it will set in a less offensive point of view the commission I gave thee to place thyself between this knight and the daughter of David of Huntingdon."

The two rivals looked anxiously toward the king, as he proceeded—

"I can tell thee the tale in few words. Thou art the lineal descendant of Eleonora of Aquitaine, brought over, while a child, to England, and named Hastings, from the spot where thy nurse landed with thee in her arms. Thy claims on Aquitaine and Guyenne were so strong, that with thee at the head of an invading army, I trusted to annihilate the policy, as well as the forces of Philip-Augustus. With thee, too, allied with the Huntingdon branch of the royal family of Scotland, I would have broken up the alliance between France and Scotland, or at the least, have rendered the assistance of the latter tardy and feeble. Thy sovereign, Henry d'Aquitaine, hath now to ask thy forgiveness for the concealment of that which, if known, might have marred thy reception at the court of William. The deceit of that accursed agent hath frustrated a scheme fraught with many advantages to both countries—if indeed he hath yet succeeded: thou art weak and exhausted, Sir Henry, but thou mayest yet be spared to take vengeance on the deceiver; and at the head of the troops of England, to recover the fiefs which the monarch of France hath only nominally wrenched from our crown."

Sir Henry held out his hand feebly, and took that of the king—

"Alas! my gracious monarch," he almost whispered, "my hours are numbered. I feel the poison through every vein; the potion—Adam—Moredun, I ask thy forgiveness—I ask her forgiveness through thee. This is a sad scene for royalty, my gracious liege; I have yet somewhat for thine ear—for thine alone."

The king motioned to Moredun and Adam to withdraw. Sir Henry spoke at intervals, and with great difficulty—

"The prince was to be taken to Dunsinnane—a place feared, and never approached. I had gained over a priest in the chapel near the palace. I meant to offer the restoration of the child as the price of her hand—pardon, my gracious master! The elements favored Maelstrom. He deceived us both: he sailed from Dundee with the prince, not for Normandy—but—"

"Whither, Sir Henry, whither?" the king demanded, impetuously.

"Hither, hither," De Hastings replied, making a desperate effort to raise himself, and glaring wildly toward the casement; "send troops—quick, quick, he is there!" and pointing in the same direction, he fell back exhausted.

While this was passing, Moredun and Adam had gone into the exterior cave, where they met Godfrey entering from the performance of the last sad duties to one toward whom he had felt in his childhood as toward a mother. The countenances of all the party were marked by the deepest seriousness and thought, as they drew near a similar opening to that in the larger cave, which, like it, looked out upon the sea, and upon that mass of rock, so often referred to, which resembled a fortress rather than a disjointed section of the natural barrier of the ocean. They maintained a profound silence—a silence dictated alike by their own feelings and by respect for the adjoining death-chamber, in which a mighty monarch was receiving a lesson on the vanity of human life, and the uncertainty of the best-laid schemes—which, if it did not make any lasting impression, it was not for want of "external circumstances" to give it force; and it may well be questioned, if all the vaulted roofs and pealing organs in Christendom could have given such effect to a sermon on death, as was given in that cave, followed up by what we are now about to relate.

The party at the natural casement in the external cave had not been left long to their own reflections, when the king came out of the inner cavern, and, addressing Adam, said—

"I think Sir Henry hath fallen into a refreshing slumber. Sir Robert," he added, turning to Moredun, "we wish not that what hath passed this day may in aught withdraw thee from thy fealty to the Scottish crown, nor from thy personal attachment to the noble-minded, though somewhat over-hasty, monarch who wears it. But if those friendly relations between the two countries be maintained—which it is the great aim of all my policy to cultivate—thou wilt at all times find a cordial reception at our southern court, to which thou art now allied as an English knight, and soon will be by the additional ties of possessions there pertaining to thy rank."

He was interrupted by the return of Adam hastily from the chamber of Sir Henry, to which he had gone on receiving the intimation that the patient was asleep.

"Your Majesty, and onybody that likes, may gang into that chamber without ony danger o' disturbing the sleep o' Sir Henry de Hastings; poor man! it matters little to him now whase son he was; the sleep he is in now settles a' accounts and heritages. He's whar the wicked"—with a glance at the king—"cease from troubling, and whar the weary are at rest. Tam Macduff, and Peter Skinner o' the Curfew Row, will make main for him, for he was a good maister, and paid handsomely for his lodging."

It was indeed as Adam said. That which the monarch had taken for sleep was the departure of the light of life from an exhausted lamp; and the emaciated form of the once handsome young cavalier lay there, a sad and silent reproof to kingcraft and its tools. The monarch, and those who followed him, knelt and crossed themselves. As the king rose and turned to leave the cavern, he said, in passing, to Moredun—

"We shall give directions from Durham respecting the funeral. Young knights, I bid ye farewell!"

He stepped out into the outer cavern, the two knights following, that they might see him to horse, when, ere they reached the external entrance, the king, his eyes bursting from their sockets, terror in every feature, and his whole frame convulsed, attempted to rush past them, but fell senseless into the arms of the Knight of Moredun.

On Sir Robert calling for water, Godfrey and Adam Peebles ran out to the entrance of the cave, where a small fountain trickled from the rocks, and filled a natural basin with its crystal drops.

There Adam saw at once the cause of the horror which had come over the king. The body of the Lady Ada lay on the rock near the entrance to the cave—the same form which lay in marble within the chapel at Sherwood.

He was at first almost as much overpowered as the king himself at the unexpected sight; but he remembered what Deborah had told him of the shipwreck, took some water in his helmet to Moredun, ran out again, and, with the assistance of Godfrey, carried the body quickly to a spot where it could not be seen from the path which the king had to ascend.

By a copious application of the water, and something which Adam brought out of the stores, the king was restored to consciousness, and assumed somewhat of his usual quietude of manner sooner than could have been anticipated.

"The sad scene I had been witnessing," he said to Moredun, "had a more powerful effect on me than I had calculated upon. I am not used to such things; and the nephew I have lost has always been one of my chief favorites. Give me thine arm, Sir Robert, we shall go forth together. I am become a very coward, methinks. It is well that Leicester hath not seen me thus play the woman."

As they emerged from the cave, he shuddered as he cast a timid glance toward the rock which had served as a dark slab for the white marble effigy; but when he saw no longer what he now believed to have been an "unreal mockery"—a creation of his overheated imagination—his step became firm, and the squire, who met him with the horses at the top of the path, could not have traced, either in his features or manner, that his royal master had been receiving the deathbed confessions of his favorite, and visiting, in imagination, the tomb of the fairest of all his victims.

His Majesty noticed the absence of one of his equerries only with a bitter smile, which seemed to say that he expected as much; mounted his steed, bade a courteous adieu to the cavaliers, closed his visor, and rode off; returning to Durham in the character he had left it, as the Black Knight, but with only one attendant instead of two.

As Godfrey and Moredun descended together, the former told Sir Robert of the body he had found, and the reason he had to believe, from what Adam said, that it had occasioned the distraction of the king—although why it did so he could not exactly comprehend. On rejoining Adam, that faithful squire, who was still at the casement or opening in the smaller cave, looking seaward very attentively, in answer to a question relative to the king's alarm, put a packet into the hands of Moredun, saying, while he did not withdraw his eyes for an instant from the window—

"That packet, Sir Robert, will, I expect, prove that the lady whose body was found by Sir Godfrey—Ay, there he is at last!" he exclaimed; "there's Macduff wi' the boat! The sea is a bit uneasy yet, and grumbling; but if he takes care no to come owre near the shore, there's nae danger."

"I sent Tam aff," he continued, "as soon as I recognized him as ane o' the king's attendants—how he cam into sic a berth, the deil ane o' me can imagine; but the moment I saw him I sent him aff for the boat which he kent well enough whar to find: and there he comes, and right glad am I to see him, as ye will a' be, if I am right in my conjectures. I only hope he'll keep weel out, until it be time to turn in at the proper place. No; stupid fellow! there he is turning in owre soon—no, he's out again. That's right, Macduff, keep on in that way, and there's nae fear."

In such ejaculations Adam kept watching the motions of the boat, which was evidently striving against a rising tide to avoid being driven too close to the rocks, at the same time to reach the larger or castellated mass. When it neared that rock, it was hid for some time from their view as it had to go round it, seaward. By-and-by, it was seen turning the extreme point of that isolated-looking fortress, and was coming in on the south side. There it stopped, rocking and heaving, while Macduff was essaying hard to steady it with an oar, placed, as it appeared, in one of the crevices.

"I hope they recognized the signal," Adam said, "which I sent up to them by that cord. I wonder what can be keeping them. Ah, there they are!" and a young woman and a lad stepped out of the rock itself, as it seemed, but actually out of a fissure in it, and took their places, the girl at the stern, and the lad taking one of the oars, and placing himself on the seat *toward the off-side*.

Macduff, with the other oar, now attempted to push the boat off; but the action of the tide forced it always close to the rock, and Adam

edged with anxiety, as he witnessed Macduff's inexperienced and unsteady attempts to get it out to sea.

At last he succeeded; and Adam was clapping his hands with joy, as he saw the stem of the boat gradually wearing away from the rock, while the stern alone was now in contact with it—when he beheld Maelstrom rush from below the casement from whence he and his companions were surveying the scene—cut through the waves with a few desperate bounds, reach the ledge of rocks at the base of the castellated mass, and run round toward the spot to which the boat was still partially clinging.

That unlooked-for visitant had now only to spring on board; but the boat rocked so much, that this would have been accompanied with danger. He stretched out his arms therefore to seize it, at the moment when one of the heaving waves sent it near the spot on which he stood; but as he leant forward with this intention, Macduff dealt him a blow on the back of the head with the oar, which sent him over with a heavy plunge into the boiling abyss.

Twice he arose to the surface—twice he sprang toward the boat, leaving a deep track of blood at each bound, and twice Macduff struck him, as his hands were almost touching the side of the little craft. The third was Maelstrom's last effort; for the push of the oar which followed it, sent the boat sheer away from the rocky mass. It was hid, immediately after, from the view of those in the cave, by the gloomy abode from which the two prisoners had escaped; but it was soon again seen beyond it, impelled by the two willing oarsmen, and favored by a tide which carried it safe above the outer reef, bounding over the waves in the direction of Tynemouth Priory.

While these things were passing, Godfrey had hurried out of the cave down to the shore, and had even advanced some distance into the water, to snatch, if possible, Maelstrom, to whose fate he could not hold himself indifferent, from the destruction to which he was exposing himself. He was only in time to assist him ashore, bleeding from the wounds Macduff had inflicted, and weak from his lengthened and renewed exertions, as well as from the loss of blood. He carried, rather than assisted him to the cave, where he was laid on one of the rude couches with which various recesses in the caverns were furnished. He was speechless, although apparently not insensible to what was passing around him.

The two knights called Adam, to confer with them as to what was best now to be done.

"I tell you frankly, Sir Cavaliers, that I haena the smallest dependence on the good intentions o' the King o' England. There's an auld story about the deil being sick, which is owre weel kent to need repetition. Tak my advice, and mak a fitting without warning; ther'll be sodgers enough down here, by-and-by, to tak charge o' the living, as weel as the dead, or I'm far mista'en. The greatest difficulty is

to ken how we are to do wi' this poor man; he's your ain faither, Sir Godfrey, after a's come and gaen; and it'll no do to leave him to the tender mercies o' John Lackland: and I'm sure neither o' ye would like to leave the comely form o' the Lady Ada in sic hands as he'll send here."

"Of what lady is it," Moredun asked, "of whom I have heard you more than once speak?"

"Of one who was to both of us more than a mother," Godfrey replied. "Come this way, Moredun, and thou wilt behold the fairest form, which even a son might be proud to recognize, and to point to as the being who gave him birth. Behold there, Moredun, the lady of whom I have told thee, who brought us here in our childhood."

"Merciful Heaven!" Moredun exclaimed, kneeling beside the body, "it is the form of her who but yesterday claimed me as her son. She said we should meet again. Alas! that it should be thus!"

A flat rock, which is still to be seen near the entrance of the southern cave, is that on which the body of the Princess Ada was laid, when he who gave orders for her death saw, as he fancied, the marble figure from Sherwood come to enforce the lesson he had been receiving in the caverns; and a deep hollow in the rock not far distant, now nearly filled by a constantly increasing cairn, marks the spot where the foster-brothers mourned over their royal parent. The visitors to Marsden Rocks, who have taken any interest in the fortunes of her whose form was still so lovely, even when she could no more rouse the passions, nor take revenge on the deeds of her betrayers, will not withhold the contribution of a white pebble from that simple monument to the memory of the Princess Ada of Circassia, the unacknowledged Queen of England.

A boat was found in the store of the brigands, and launched. Maelstrom was carried on board, as well as the body of the Lady Ada; and as the two cavaliers saw Adam handle the oars, and let them dip gently at first into the brine, and as they watched the boat gliding away through the rocks into the open sea, they felt convinced that the cargo was in safe hands. They returned together to the cave, covered the body of Sir Henry, so as to mark the respect with which they left the scene of his sufferings, mounted their horses, which Adam had carefully tended, and took again the road they had traversed in the morning.

Adam Peebles had not been wrong in his calculations. During the day, a cortège, partly military, partly ecclesiastical, left Durham for Marsden Rocks, and returned in the evening with torches, and all the usual insignia of a funeral procession.

But the chronicles of the period do not say whether the increased length of the procession, in returning, was occasioned by the number of vehicles bringing away the contraband stores

from the caves; and they are equally silent as to the cause of the sad want of order, and the singular unsteadiness of march with which one part of the procession re-entered the gates of the cathedral.

One fact is certain, that, for the rest of the week, there was a scene of riot and disorder in the Bishop's palace, which gave great offense to that dignitary, and great scandal to all the neighborhood; and that, in the next communication with which John was honored from the chair of Saint Peter, there was an allusion made to the intemperance manifested at Durham, which the quidnuncs of the day considered very personal in its application; and that when his Holiness referred to John having let loose the wild beasts of the forest, it was perfectly clear to every one that he meant to include the wild bucks of the court.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WOOL-PACK.

As the large room of the Wool-pack at Newcastle, to which the former frequenters of the Crown and Anchor had transferred their custom, began to fill on the evening of the day when the events we have recorded took place at Marsden Rocks, it was observed that every one entered with a face of greater importance than another; and that, above all, our acquaintance, Johnnie Clayton, the barber-lawyer, seemed in danger of bursting with the inflation of intelligence. He wished to hide it, however, under an affectation of indifference. Johnnie, like all great men, had his foibles.

"Cold, Joseph, cold for the season, certainly," he said, addressing the landlord, while rubbing his hands before the fire—then, turning quickly round and chucking the landlady under the chin, who was passing with a pot of something hot—"with thee, Madge, on the one side, and the fire on the other, one, natheless, should not complain long of cold—the more especially if thou give me a noggin the same—or, as we of the law would say, a fair copy of that in thy jolly hand."

"Bless us, Master Clayton," Madge replied, "take care, or thou wilt have summat hot where thee'd rather not, as I take it."

"Not bad that, Elstob—not bad at all—Madge is sharpish a bit, and one would need to be sharp in these days, Elstob; one would need to be sharp, to keep up with times such as these, my gossip—even the law would require to be quickish—and that thou knowest it hath the name not to be—exactly, give a dog an ill name—and all that sort of thing—you comprehend—eh, Elstob?" seating himself at the same table with the butcher, where two or three others were already making themselves comfortable, and who seemed to prepare themselves for a budget of news on Johnnie's arrival, by each taking a good long pull at his tankard

then placing his elbows on the table, and then all turning, eyes left, to the lawyer.

Johnnie seemed rather to enjoy this sort of deference, and to look for it by a kind of prescriptive right; and, like all men dressed in a little brief authority, he wished to make his power felt, and to tamper with the feelings of his auditory, as a cat does with the mouse which it honors with its notice.

"How is the grass looking, Wilburn? Better after the shower, I daresay. It came down perhaps rather hard, eh? These thunder-plouets are like royal visits, gossip, eh?—they astonish rather than fructify; thank thee, Madge—thou hast been fed on a good pasturage, anyhow—my service to thee, landlady, and to all, gossips."

"Thou mightst have been fed on good grass, too, Master Clayton, for ought I know; but I opine thou didst talk too much to profit by it," the landlady replied; and the hearty laugh, which was chorused all round the room, showed how much the expectants of news were irritated by the stream of intelligence being choked up at the fountain-head.

"Good, Madge, good again," the lawyer said; who, feeling his vantage-ground, was not in the least ruffled by seeing that others were; "very good, we must find thee a place in the Moot-hall to-morrow, Madge—the dull court of our good earl-king hath need of something to enliven it."

"Cometh the king here to-morrow?" several voices called out at once.

"I mentioned not the name of the king," Clayton replied, looking very important. "I spoke but of a court; and all the world knoweth that we hold many courts there. There is the court of the Wittonagemott—there is the court of the Folkmote and the Burgmote—there is the court—"

"I can myself vouch for one of the courts," Wilburn said, interrupting him, "and that is the court of the Commissioners for the Borders; by all that's sacred, either in law or Gospel, that is a court for trying patience, anyhow, whether it try any thing else or not."

"And that can be tried elsewhere, as well as in the Moot-hall," Boynton observed—and the triumph of Johnnie Clayton was complete—he could bear up no longer—he relaxed—the great man gave way.

"It is not well, gossips," he said—and the condescension with which he uttered these words those only can imagine who have witnessed a great-little-man thaw under the sun of popular adulation—"It is not well to trifle with the public expectation, when matters of such moment are in agitation. The king himself cometh on the morrow, on affairs of the weightiest nature, and is, in his own gracious person, to hold a court in the Moot-hall. The army, which hath given the reiving Turnbolls of the Borders a turn which they are not likely soon to forget, is ordered hither. I affirm not why. It may be that the troops from York are even now in Durham; I affirm it not—I state the

fact—I bring forward the evidence; I pronounce no judgment—I sit not on the judgment-seat; I am at the bar"—and the modesty of the orator was touching—"but this I will say, without fear of contradiction, that such a day as to-morrow, whether regarded in its mysterious aspect from without, or in its complicated aspect within, will be one of the most important which the town, founded by the grandson of William the Conqueror, hath ever seen"—and Johnnie Clayton exhausted himself, drained his tankard to the very bottom, and called for a second.

"This, Boynton, looks like business," Wilburn remarked.

"Will any thing be said on the subject of the cattle which the Turnbolls helped themselves to at Wooler Fair?" Elstob asked. "I had bought a drove there only an hour before the raid took place."

"The subject of cattle, if it come on at all," the lawyer said, "must be entered on the roll; and I do not affirm even that there is a roll—far less on what part of the roll the cattle may be impounded. On one point, however, I believe, I may be permitted to be precise, and that is, that one of the earliest causes to be tried is that affair of the contrabandists."

"But that respecteth the county of Durham, doth it not, Master Clayton?" the principal grocer asked, turning very pale.

"So far as respecteth the granary among the rocks, Master Mellish," Clayton replied—"there thou art right; but in what regardeth the vessel—the *Thistle*—which lay so many days at our port, as it hath often done before, and it is well known that it hath never lain there idle, that, Master Mellish, cometh within the jurisdiction of the Moot-hall of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, whereof the humble individual who now addresseth you hath the honor to be the servitor and impleader."

Mellish looked exceedingly uncomfortable; but, to hide his confusion, he remarked, with what he thought the most careless air imaginable—

"There was a lady on board, was there not, about whom some mystery was made?"

"Where didst thou learn that, gossip Mellish?" Clayton asked, very quickly and sharply.

Mellish looked very hard into his tankard while he answered—

"Oh! I heard it among the many stories circulating throughout the town—such as that about the Scotchman, who ran off with Deborah—pretty Deborah of the Crown and Anchor—she whom thou didst affect, Master Clayton—and who was brought back by two knights, after they had killed a lady, wounded her husband, and took two others prisoners."

"Thou hast ears too open for such stories, gossip Mellish," the clerk of the Moot-hall answered; "they may bring thee into trouble, if thou shut them not. But whether it was by thine eyes or thine ears, that thou camest to know of the lady on board the *Thistle*, thou

wilt have to give an account of it to-morrow; for never, since the days when the ships of Solomon brought apes to Jerusalem, hath the contents of any vessel excited such inquiry as that which will be made of and regarding the cargo of the *Thistle of Dundee*, suspected to have been the *Lily of Dieppe*, or the *Crescent of Damascus*."

And the man of law, knowing he had produced an impression, drained his tankard with nonchalance, as if he had made the most commonplace remark possible.

"This looks very serious," Wilburn remarked to Boynton.

"I thought it had been the kine of Bashan they had bought with the gold of Ophir," Elstob said—feeling for his neighbor Mellish's situation, and wishing to give a turn to the conversation.

"All the gold in the coffers of the King of Scotland," a thin man with a very shrill voice remarked, "will not bring back the heir to his throne, drowned in that vessel."

Clayton felt he was fairly outdone—all he had said had produced no such impression as this speech, which made every one in the room start; so, turning at once on the thin man, with a look which was meant to demolish him, he replied—

"Kings' sons, Sir Stranger, do not generally go for an airing in contraband vessels; and, when they are drowned, the news hath surer messengers than public rumor."

This was meant to be definitive; however, the thin man, a draper from Morpeth, was not to be so easily put down—

"I had it for certain," he said, "in Morpeth, that the king's son was missing. I heard since I came to Newcastle, that a ship from Scotland had been wrecked; and if that be not sufficient to establish the news I have given to this company, then, certes, I do not know of what materials or of what quality news ought to be made, in order to take the market."

"Now," said the lawyer, seeing certain victory before him—but seeing, at the same time, that it would be necessary to bring all his forces into the field—"now, friends and gossips, I pray you, look at what it is to take, like our friend the mercer here, some random scraps of news, and to put them together, in the hope of making an entire garment out of those remnants—and contrast this with facts, gossips, such as these—mark—that four horses have been standing some days unclaimed in the little stable at Shields—no one knowing what hath become of their owners, who are supposed to have been murdered at Marsden Rocks by a gang of whom Michael Plummer was the leader—who afterward turned on him, packed him up in a box, and sent him home; whereupon he, stung with remorse for the share he had had in these horrible proceedings, went down to the cellar of his house, where two Scotchmen had been murdered, who came to the Crown and Anchor, and were never afterward heard of—

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placed some faggots above the spot where the Scotchmen were buried, lighted them, and burned the Crown and Anchor to the ground, perishing himself in the conflagration."

Here the orator, whom all eyes regarded and on whom all ears hung, raised the tankard to his lips, but set it down instantly, with an expression of horror in his countenance which made all at the table believe that the terror of his tale had been too much for him. He had cause to be alarmed. At the window fronting him, he saw the face of Michael Plummer peering into the apartment.

As it, however, as suddenly disappeared, he believed it to have been the creation of his own over-excitement; so, assuming a more moderate tone, he recommenced—

"As if this were not enough, gossips, there arrives at the quay, this afternoon, a boat, having on board the dead body of a female, and a man nearly dead also, but so covered up, that all my attempts to obtain a glimpse, by lifting up the edge of the coverlet, were totally fruitless. This was strange enough, and mysterious enough; but what think you, gossips?—who, think you, brought in this strange cargo to our port? A big, strong, English cross-bowman—a fellow who had murder written in his very countenance. So, what cometh of thy story of the two knights, neighbor Mellish?"

And lo! to corroborate Johnnie Clayton's statement, as the words were spoken, the door opened, and the redoubted cross-bowman himself, Adam Peebles, stepped in, and stalked hurriedly up the stair which led from the large public room to the private apartments above.

"Dost thou think it safe, Master Clayton," Mellish inquired, "that he go up there alone?"

"I have my doubts, Master Mellish, I have my doubts; but if Elstob here, who is the stoutest and biggest, will go first, I do not care if I follow."

Johnnie was stopped by the entrance of two persons in close conversation—that is, he ceased of his own accord—his desire of receiving information getting the better of his inclination to retail it, or his ambition to join in the escalade.

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain," an important little man in black was saying to Godfrey as the door opened, and they entered together, "that the bruises on the occiput are dangerous, but that those on the sinciput are slight; so that—"

"In short, learned sir," Godfrey said, as he paused on the first step of the stair-case, "what is thine opinion?—Is the case dangerous, or is it not?"

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain," the little man replied, "that he may live by the bruises on the sinciput, and yet die of those on the occiput."

"Thou mayest remain below here, and call for what thou desirest," Godfrey said, continuing to ascend; "and if we have further need of thee, I shall let thee know, after consulting with my friend."

The little man went toward the fire, rubbing his hands, and bowing to every one in turn as he passed.

"May I ask to what case allusion was made," Johnnie Clayton inquired of this new arrival, his rival chirurgeon, "when thou enteredst just now with that chevalier?"

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, it was a case," the little man replied, with an important air, as he turned his back to the fire, and spread out his legs so as to hide it as much as possible from all others in the room, "that it is a case of difficulty and of danger. Of difficulty, inasmuch as the patient is an English knight, and yet seems to be a foreigner, has a humble appearance, and yet commands all around him as if he were a person of importance: and it is a case of danger, because I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, he may die before the difficulty be solved."

"May I be so bold as to inquire, learned sir," Mellish said, very meekly, "how the case hath arisen?"

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, that it arose thus," the chirurgeon answered; "but first give me a pot of the best, mine hostess; thou heardest what the chevalier said, and I should be sorry not to do justice to the case—therefore let the recipe be good. Put no mead in—that soureth on the stomach—the Schiedam, when not in too small a quantity, is a rectifier of crudities—a double portion, therefore, of the Schiedam, my good Madge. The case, messieurs, arose thus: We were called in to attend a young man who was saved from the burning, and I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, that that young man was a young woman, and, as far as my humble skill goeth, of exceeding beauty. He, or, as I ought to say she, was saved by that young knight, who naturally was seized with an affection of the heart. We met him this afternoon, and were able to administer to that malady by giving him the address of the page. In return for which, he charged us to wait upon and examine into the case of a wounded cavalier brought in a boat this day from Marsden Rocks."

"The same that I told you of, gossips," Clayton said, looking complacently around; "brought in a boat under the charge of the English cross-bowman, who hath but now gone to the apartments above."

"Is Joseph Gibson, the landlord of the Woolpack, within?" a soldier inquired, who partially opened the door and looked in.

"He is here, sir, at your service."

And our former acquaintance Gilbert, commander of the reconnoitering party, stepped forward.

"Ah! there are some old acquaintances here, I see. Good-day to ye all, gentlemen. Joseph, our good king, cometh to Newcastle to-morrow, attended by a body of troops. Some of the advanced guard will arrive early, and a piquet of six of us must be astir with the dawn to pre-

pare lodging for them. Canst thou find room for us for one night?"

"Why, I know not well how to do," Joseph answered; "our rooms above and behind are all full."

"Oh, it is not the first time we have been content with the kitchen, in Newcastle," Gilbert answered; "thou hast room for our horses, I know. Go and put up the horses in the yard behind, lads," he called without, "and then come in here." Advancing to the table where Clayton and his companions were seated—"Ah! my little barber, how goeth it?—how wags the world with thee?"

"Very strangely, Commander, very strangely indeed," Johnnie replied, shaking his head; "thou didst find us the other day in perturbation, and now we are in perplexity."

"How so, my little man?" the Commander replied, slapping him on the shoulder; "nothing but what the king will put all to rights to-morrow, I'll warrant."

"Then he'll have enough to do," Clayton answered; "what with horses for which owners can not be found, and wounded people, and dead bodies, for which names are wanting. Of the latter I can speak myself—of the former, I believe this gentleman, who is in possession of the fire, knoweth something."

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, I ought to know something," the person appealed to said, "seeing we were called upon to wait professionally this afternoon on one who hath been grievously wounded, specially on the occiput; and I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, that the young woman who waited upon him called him Maelstrom."

"Maelstrom!" exclaimed the Commandant, starting to his feet.

"Maelstrom!" chorused all at the table, in varied notes of astonishment and terror.

"I must see him directly," Gilbert added, addressing the chirurgeon.

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, that it would be dangerous," the learned man said.

"Dangerous! how, Sir Leech, that word to a soldier?"

"Not dangerous for thee, brave sir! but dangerous for the patient."

"And besides, Captain," Johnnie Clayton interposed, "thy presence at this moment cannot be dispensed with here. There is danger near at hand—within the very house, brave Captain."

"How now, Sir Barber, what mean you?"

"There hath been murder, Commander," Johnnie replied, looking very fierce, "murder, as I may say; and this wounded man—this Maelstrom, as it now appears—hath been brought back this day—brought back, I say, in the open face of day, by a man who looketh capable of having committed them all, by a stalwart English cross-bowman, Captain—an English bowman, who is even now in this very house; who came in here without even saying, By your leave."

bearded us here at this very table, and stalked up stairs not half an hour since, in presence of us all."

"This is singular," Gilbert observed, with one foot on the staircase, "is he still up here?"

"Thou mayest convince thyself, Captain. But would it not be well to take some of thy men with thee?"

By this time the captain was already on the staircase, the whole coterie from the table following him, Johnnie himself next the commandant.

On arriving at the first landing-place and opening the door in front of him, the captain, with the party looking over his shoulders, beheld Moredun, with papers before him, seated at a table near the fire; Godfrey, on the balcony, near one of the windows which opened out upon it; and the dreaded English cross-bowman, looking very happy, and talking very peaceably in a corner with Mary Wilson. The astonishment of Gilbert was overwhelming.

"Do I see aright?" he called out; "mine excellent and worthy friend Adam Peebles, and his noble master! Pardon, Sir Robert de Moredun, I have been the dupe of a pack of fools and poltroons. Down stairs with you, ye imbeciles! But what is this they tell me, Sir Robert, about Maelstrom?"

"Set thy mind at rest, Gilbert," Sir Robert replied; "to-morrow all will be explained, as well as the singular habit in which thou seest our worthy Adam there."

The captain, after again apologizing for the intrusion, joined the party below stairs.

"This is a pretty wild-goose chase ye sent me upon, gossips. I wonder what our good king would say, if he knew I had intruded myself in that manner on his great favorite, Sir Robert de Moredun. But come, I won't bear ye any grudge—a noggin all round, my worthy hostess! Adam does look a little fierce, I confess. I wonder what hath become of the young man, Malcom Beg, I lost among ye here; he was a good lad that, I shall be sorry if any thing hath befallen him. By the way, barber, is it true that the body of the landlord of the Crown and Anchor was found in the cellar?"

"It is too true, Captain," Clayton replied, "and there are things said which make it a bad business—a very bad business altogether. Murders are spoken of—one of them the young man of whom ye have made mention."

"It is not possible!" the Captain cried; "this is dreadful."

"It is indeed, Commandant; and it is positively affirmed, that Michael Plummer set fire to the hostelry with his own hands to hide his misdeeds."

The words were scarcely out of the mouth of Johnnie Clayton, when the door leading from the court opened, and Michael Plummer, his eyes bloodshot, and his head enveloped in a napkin, stepped in, and stood staring wildly on the convivalists. All, save the captain, rose and fled in dismay to the other end of the apartment.

The Captain, after surveying the apparition steadily for a few seconds, walked up and took hold of it.

"Michael Plummer?" he said.

"Noble Captain," the apparition replied.

The door at the top of the stair had opened, Godfrey had descended, and was passing them quickly, but perceiving Plummer in the hands of the captain—

"Michael Plummer," he said, "is it really thee? We thought thee dead: how is this?"

"And I demand of him what hath become of Malcom Beg, with whose death he stands charged?" added the Captain.

"I am guiltless of the death of any one," poor Michael replied, with a groan.

"He is indeed, I will be responsible for him," Godfrey said. "Take him near the fire, Gilbert, and look carefully to him. I am glad, after all, that poor Mike is spared to us. Take care of him, Captain."

Thus saying, Godfrey rushed out into the court, and the Scottish soldiers came in.

Michael Plummer was now conducted near the fire, which the man learned in chirurgy had forsaken—not for the other end of the apartment, but for the outside of the house; and under the care and the restoratives of the worthy Madge, the resuscitated innkeeper soon began to resemble his ancient self, and his old associates one by one drew near, and took him kindly by the hand.

"Canst thou tell us, gossip Plummer," Clayton said, when the recollection and the spirits of the poor man seemed somewhat restored, "canst thou tell us any thing of how all this hath happened?"

"Why, it is a long tale, gossips, and much of it ye would not understand, eh?" and the old wink of the eye came half back again as he said so. "But I can tell ye this, that the fire was the doing of that devil Grimsby, whom ye may remember to have seen sometimes at the Crown and Anchor."

"Ay, that fellow," Elstob said—"with the forehead of an ox, and short on his shanks, like the Durham breed."

"Well, gossips," Michael proceeded, "as I lay awake that night—that fearful night, which ye remember, eh? and which I shall remember to my latest hour—I hears the whistle of Grimsby; so down I goes and lets him in. He wanted drink: I saw he had had more than enough already, and I refused. He wanted to go down to the cellar. I resisted. He was a strong fellow, ye know, eh? as Elstob says. So what does he do? He seizes me, ties me up in one of my dame's large coverlets, which were in the side kitchens—ye remember, eh?—carries me out to the yard, and throws me up, like a bundle of hay, into a lumber loft, to which the fire never reached, but where there was enough of smoke, as mine eyes bear witness, eh? I suppose it was the smoke made me sleep so long and so sound, for I knew nothing until about an hour since, when I succeeded in untying the

wrapper. As Joseph and I were always good friends—eh, Joseph, were we not?—I came hither when I found I had no house of mine own, alack! alack! I looked in at the window, there; but when I saw ye all so comfortable, eh?—I never liked to disturb good company; so I went into the stable, which I was obliged to leave when these gentlemen came.”

“Well, we are right glad to see thee again, anyhow,” Clayton said, and the sentiment went round.

“But alas! friends,” poor Plummer said, “times are sadly changed; this cruel fire!”—and a tear came into his eye—“there is no longer the warm fireside, no longer the little desk, no longer—” but he could not go on with the list.

“We shall make up a little purse to set thee agoing again,” the honest butcher said.

“And I shall be the first to put down my name,” Joseph Gibson added.

“Bravo! Joseph, bravo!” ran through the room, and Michael Plummer wept aloud.

“I rather think, in fact I believe I’m certain,” the little surgeon said, who had stepped in again after ascertaining at the window that it was not a phantom the coterie were talking to; “I rather think, in fact I believe I’m certain, that I have a message from the lady that was formerly known as the niece of that poor man.”

“Formerly known?” Johnnie Clayton said, in great surprise.

“Formerly known!” was echoed in various notes and tones, all round the room.

“I rather think, in fact I believe I’m certain, that formerly known was the expression used—and that the message was to this effect—that the lady formerly known as the niece of Michael Plummer was now the possessor of great estates, and would build again his inn for him, and place him comfortably in it, provided he had no more dealings with smugglers, and paid scot and lot, and the king’s dues.”

“Deborah was ever a kind good lass,” Michael whimpered out.

“She deserveth her good fortune;” and, “Her health and happiness” made the round of the tables.

“Well, Sir Mediciner,” Godfrey called out from the bottom of the staircase, as he passed in again quickly from the court, “hast thou seen the patient, and how hast thou left him?”

“I rather think, in fact I believe I’m certain, that he is enjoying a refreshing sleep: so that if the bruises on the occi—”

“Well, well—see that the nurse does her duty,” and Godfrey sprang up stairs.

He was passing rapidly through the room, where Moredun, who was still engaged reading the contents of the packet Adam had given him, called to him—

“Godfrey, hast thou no curiosity either to hear, read, or to examine those papers?”

“Much, Moredun—a deep and intense interest; but I pray thee to excuse me still for two minutes—I shall be in again on the in-

stant”—and for the twentieth time in course of the evening, Godfrey went out on balcony.

“It was her I saw even now,” he muttered; “it must be her also, from what the med and Mary have told me. But why she maintains that guise, I can not imagine—neither why she should thus avoid speaking to deliverer. Her eyes, when they awoke me, did not express aversion.”

A sweet voice from the chamber neare gallery, of the adjoining house, seemed to respond to his meditation, accompanied by thus—

“Is it fear which keeps thee valled,
Is it fear which makes thee fly,
Timid dove?”

No rude hands have thee assailed—
Can it be love, then, makes thee shy?
Yes, ‘tis love.”

Godfrey, who knew the stanzas, took the next couplet, and sang—

“Why should gentle love alarm thee—
Love with wings like thine so bright,
Gentle dove?”

‘Neath its plumage what could harm thee?
Is it love that shuns the light?”

The refrain was given from the room—

“Yes, ‘tis love!”

The young knight could bear it no longer; he sprang over the balustrade which separated the two balconies, with gentle violence pushed back the casement, and leaped into the room.

No one was there; but some one had touched the door as he entered. He opened it, ran down a staircase, on which he distinctly heard descending footsteps. He saw as far as the moonlight from a narrow window opening into the court permitted him to distinguish it, resembling that of the page, he rushed hastily into an apartment; he followed the door could be shut, and in that room, lighted up than the staircase by one large oriel window, he rushed forward, took in his arms—Blondel.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MOOT-HALL.

THE sun rose bright and joyous over castle-upon-Tyne. The troops, which had turned to Alnwick, after some sharp work on the Borders, had arrived during the night were partly encamped on the moor and quartered in the town. They were drawn up in the morning in brilliant array, those on the walls forming a double line from the tower at which the king and his court were to go to the castle; while a party, with the mandant Gilbert at their head, were stationed within the Moot-hall, and in the passage leading to that ancient fortress.

The Moot-hall itself, always sombre and imposing in appearance, wore an aspect of

ur on this occasion. Additional banners hung around on the walls; there was a throne on a lofty dais for the king and ranges of benches, likewise covered with purple on each side, for the nobles and lords; in the centre, seats and a table for the retarries of state; a platform raised in front of it for the witnesses; and above all a gallery for the public.

Early in the day the gallery began to be filled, and ere noon the sound of trumpets announced the approach of the royal cortège.

Came the king, majestic and kingly as of old, but more stern than was his wont. Beside him, Ermergard, at his side reflected the brightness of his look, mingled with a deep tinge of sadness. Even the equanimity of David of Scotland's usually mild and placid countenance was somewhat troubled; his daughter's death, so recently passed, and her continued absence, it was supposed, affected him.

William de Bosco, the chancellor, and Allan de Way, the high constable, took their seats at a table in front of the throne; Robert de Arden stood at the king's right hand—the Earl of Henry de Hastings, on the left of the king, was vacant; the other nobles and courtiers occupied the ranges on each side.

The assembly had not yet received the command of the king to be seated, when a door at the lower end of the hall was opened, and a party, which filled with amazement all present, entered, under the escort of Godfrey of Arden and Adam Peebles—it was a file of the king's foresters accompanying two litters, on the first of which was the enfeebled form of Maelstrom and on the other the corpse of the Lady Ada. Both were placed at the side of the platform for the witnesses, with the bowmen in green dresses standing in a semicircle behind them. The king was lost in wonder at the sight, but not a word was said.

William de Bosco opened the proceedings by announcing that the present was a special royal writ to try divers causes, but especially relating to a vessel which had lately touched at the port of Dunstable-upon-Tyne.

The king then commanded all to be seated; the inquiry began by the chancellor reading the indictment, in which it was set forth that a vessel commonly known as the *Thistle* of Scotland, but which was in reality the *Crescent* of the East, had for some time past carried on board, most of which, it was believed, had been illicit, with various ports on the coast; this illicit trade had been winked at, but certain suspicious circumstances having been ascertained relative to that vessel, which had returned from Dundee to Newcastle at an early time the son of the king, and heir to the throne of Scotland, had disappeared, it was ordered to institute a very rigorous inquiry as to those circumstances.

The Lord Chancellor then ordered "Jehan de Arden, servitor of the court, to call to the witness-box, Gilbert, the commander of a troop of the royal guards.

Gilbert deposed, that on such an evening he had seen, in the Crown and Anchor of Newcastle, the individual whom he identified as now in court, lying on a litter, and thought he recognized in him one who was suspected of having shot the arrow which killed the late Richard, King of England: that he put him in ward, but that next morning he was not to be found, having escaped during the night: that on inquiring on board the *Thistle* of Dundee, he ascertained, after much difficulty, that this Maelstrom was, in fact, proprietor of that vessel: that he had generally on board with him a lady whom he called his wife: that that lady had brought on board with her, at Dundee, a girl, whom she and Maelstrom kept very secret: and that they three had left the vessel on arriving at Newcastle, in the disguises he, Gilbert, had seen them in, in the Crown and Anchor.

The next witness called was Mellish the grocer; but the only result of his examination was a heavy fine on himself, for having brought various merchandise on shore without paying the dues.

The little important chirurgeon was then placed on the platform.

"You were called upon, the afternoon on which the vessel alluded to sailed from Newcastle, to visit a patient on board?"

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, I was."

"Would you know that patient again?" Godfrey asked, and all in the court were startled, and looked toward him.

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, that I would."

Godfrey lifted the covering from the face of the Lady Ada, and a murmur of admiration and astonishment arose on all hands. Even the chirurgeon was thrown out of his usual routine, and exclaimed—

"It is she! it is she!"

"What were you called in to do?" Godfrey demanded.

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, it was to dress a wound on the arm."

Godfrey lifted the cover at the side of the body, and showed the marks of a severe wound on the arm.

"It is enough," he said, and the chirurgeon was about to retire, when the Lord Chamberlain asked—

"Did you see a young woman on board that vessel?"

"I rather think, in fact I believe I'm certain, that I did not."

"You may go," and the important little man was removed.

Michael Plummer was then called, and took his place on the platform in a state of great agitation.

"Michael Plummer," De Bosco said, "it is not intended, in thy case, to institute any inquiry or proceedings relative to the transactions

Lord Chancellor then ordered "Jehan de Arden, servitor of the court, to call to the

thou mayest have had with the vessel, already frequently alluded to in this court, in respect of articles of merchandise. Thou hast had a heavy loss, and his Majesty hath desired, that, in consequence of this, the court depart from the charges against thee on this head."

Michael, in the fullness of his gratitude, dropped on his knees, and muttered a prayer for long life to the good earl-king.

"But," Bosco proceeded, "the court will look for the amplest confessions relative to thy connection with the prisoner Maelstrom, now on that litter."

The examination then went on, but the weakness and the still confused state of mind of the witness, rendered it very difficult to obtain any thing like a connected detail of what he knew respecting Maelstrom. Much of it was trivial, and related to scenes of everyday occurrence among illicit traders on the coast; but when he gave his deposition relative to the assassination of Sir Henry de Hastings, great interest was manifested, and severe and scrutinizing looks were cast, not only on the sick man, but on Godfrey, who seemed to be there in the situation of his advocate. Maelstrom, however, was perfectly unmoved during the whole proceedings, and generally lay with his eyes shut, as if asleep and unconscious of all that passed.

The name of Margaret Plummer was called, and she was about being led forward, when the principal door of the Moot-hall was hastily thrown open, and a messenger, bearing marks of hard riding, advanced up the aisle holding out a paquet, which he placed in the hands of the Lord Chancellor. De Bosco, having looked to and obtained the permission of the king, opened it, and after perusing it in part, read aloud as follows:

"Most puissant, most learned, and right trusty councillors of the gracious King William, whom the King of kings long preserve; Ambrose, the abbot of the Monastery of the Blackfriars at Perth, greeteth you well.

"A matter hath been revealed unto me, which affecteth the welfare of the realm and the happiness of the royal family, and which I hasten, therefore, to lay before your united wisdom.

"After mass this morning, in the Chapel of the Virgin, a man, having the appearance of a sailor, remained kneeling before the altar, and the brethren had much difficulty in persuading him to withdraw. He would not do so, until they promised to bring him before me, which was done, and I gave him a hearing in my private room.

"He stated that there was something on his mind which allowed him no rest, that he could neither eat nor sleep, and that he was now determined to relieve his soul by confessing it.

"He had been engaged, by the master of a ship in which he was a mariner, to assist in carrying off the Prince Alexander; and the English knight, Sir Henry de Hastings, was

privy to it. It was to be attempted on the day the river broke up; but that unexpected event had prevented his assisting in it. Even then, although he hoped the same thing which prevented him going to Scone might prevent the attempt, his conscience troubled him. He made two attempts, in vain, to rouse the suspicions of the knight of Moredun, and to send him to Scone to frustrate it, without it being known that he was the informant.

"The prince was to be stolen from the palace of Scone during one of his walks with the Lady Isabella, from whom he frequently wandered to a little distance; to be from thence taken to a place, said to be haunted, on the hill of Dunsinnane; and from thence to be taken on board the *Thistle*, then lying in the port of Dundee.

"He had since learned that the breaking up of the ice, and the confusion of that morning had altered their plans in some degree, but had enabled them to be more easily put in execution. The ship had sailed sooner than was intended, and thus had left the port without him.

"This was the substance of his confession; and he added, that he made it now, because learning that the court was in the neighborhood of Newcastle, for which port the *Thistle* sailed on leaving Dundee, he hoped that your Highnesses might be successful in searching for that Maelstrom, and ascertaining from him the fate of the young prince.

"And so, that I lose no time, I dispatch a special messenger to your lordships, praying that Saint John may take his gracious Majesty and your Highnesses into his holy keeping, and prosper your inquiries.

"AMBROSIUS ABBATUS."

While the chancellor was reading this, the agitation of the king and queen—indeed, of all present—was indescribable; and at its conclusion, all eyes were anxiously directed to Maelstrom. The king attempted to speak, but the emotion he was under prevented all utterance.

Maelstrom himself still remained unmoved; but he desired Godfrey to place another pillow under his head, so that he might be better heard, and ordering a chafing-dish to be brought and placed beside his couch, he drank off a potion which stood near him, and in a low but distinct voice thus addressed the king:

"King of Scotland, I have permitted the evidence to go on so far, because I wished it to be before the court, in order that it may serve to establish the identity of the persons whose history and conduct, so far as they are connected with an inquiry so deeply interesting to the royal family, and indeed to the whole realm of Scotland, it is now my wish, inasmuch as my strength will permit, to lay before a monarch, whom no one in all this assembly respects more highly than he who now lieth before him, on his couch of death."

The composure, almost the dignity, with which

he spoke, made all in the court look toward him with renewed curiosity and wonder.

"But, noble king," he continued, "I also have my witnesses to produce. Order the Lady Isabella of Huntingdon into court."

A door at the side of the dais opened, and the Lady Isabella, the Prince Alexander of Scotland leaning on her arm, entered, followed by Macduff and Malcom Beg.

A cry of joy and of surprise arose from the whole assembly—the queen fainted as her son flew into her arms, and the king folded both in his embrace. The Lady Isabella was advancing toward her father, but, as if overcome by faintness, sank down on the seat reserved for Sir Henry de Hastings.

When the queen had recovered, and silence was restored, Maelstrom resumed his address—

"William the Lion, thou seest lying here as thy prisoner, Isaac, King of Cyprus."

King William and all his court simultaneously arose as they heard these words, but Maelstrom motioned to them to resume their seats, with the air of one accustomed to receive homage, as he thus continued—

"Dethroned by Richard the Lion-hearted, it was this hand which directed the arrow from the walls of Chalus, that laid low the noblest, but the proudest and cruelest heart in Christendom. I vowed revenge, and I kept my vow."

A shudder ran throughout the whole court; for although England was then considered almost as the natural enemy of Scotland, Richard had been universally looked to as the chief or king of chivalry.

"Ye may well look aghast—for it was to make room for the basest heart that e'er beat in a royal bosom, and the weakest hand which ever held a sceptre.

"But I had a deeper cause of hatred to move me than the loss of a throne; he took from me twin sisters, Princesses of Circassia, whom I had taken captive with my sword and with my bow—the fairest captives which e'er the sun shone upon: one of them lieth there."

And as Godfrey removed the pall, and showed the transcendently beautiful woman, clothed in the white drapery which on many occasions she had worn so gracefully, murmurs of admiration rose from the crowded court, and many an eye was dimmed as it gazed on the lovely form.

"The twin sisters," Maelstrom resumed, "were deceived with the forms of marriage by Richard and his brother John. The Princess Ada here was betrothed to Richard—their son, the Knight of Moredun, is at thy side, King William, as he was in the hour of peril. His mother was made a widow by my hands, and *our* son, Godfrey of Ettrick, standeth beside me here. Her sister, Zillah, and her child, were strangled by the minions of her husband."

The feelings of the audience were now worked up to the highest pitch; but the King of Cyprus went on—

"I was unknown personally to King John, and under the name of Maelstrom I became, nominally, one of his tools—actually a frustrator of his plots, in league with her here, whom he and his brother betrayed.

"To this end I became the captain of a band of contrabandists; and, in league with Wladislas, King of Bohemia and Moravia, who had renounced the throne of those unhappy countries, and taken refuge in the disputed territory between England and Scotland, I had laid a mine which would have shaken the vacillating tyrant from his throne. It hath pleased the Ruler of all to unfold it prematurely. But if John hath escaped, it hath not been scathless, and Scotland hath been rescued from his grasp."

Observing symptoms of a demonstration of feeling on the part of the people, he said—

"Let me entreat those who hear me to maintain silence; my strength is failing me, and I have still much to disclose. Call Wladislas of Ettrick into court, with the Princess Jean of Anjou, and her daughter, the Lady Anne of Soderbergh."

A door at the back of the dais was thrown open, and the chief of Ettrick entered, conducting the two ladies, followed by Blondel. A murmur of astonishment ran through the court when in the Lady Anne was recognized Deborah of the Crown and Anchor.

The scene which the Moot-hall of Newcastle-upon-Tyne presented at that moment was in the highest degree interesting, impressive, and extraordinary. An Eastern monarch laid in the centre of the hall, a weak, helpless prisoner, accused of crimes of the deepest dye, yet restoring confidence, hope, and happiness to bosoms which he himself had been accused of wounding; the companion of lawless men, the perpetrator of deeds of darkness, summoning monarchs to be his judges, and looking with calmness and confidence for their verdict—claiming as his son—and that son proud of the appellation—the accepted suitor of the undoubted heiress of the English throne, and pointing to the most queenly form which ever graced a throne or bore a sceptre, as the companion of all his intrigues, of his dangers, and of his ambition; his retinue, the bowmen of Ettrick Forest—his most alarmed listeners, the flower of the Scottish nobility and court. Overlooking this singular group, the King and Queen of Scotland stood, encircling in their embrace their newly-restored son—scarcely conscious of whether they owed his disappearance or his restoration to the individual before them. The abdicator of the throne of Bohemia, the English princess, supposed to lie buried at Clairvaux, and her fair and blooming daughter, forming another royal group; the nobles of the Scottish court and their ladies, in full court costume, ranged on each side of the ample hall—and, above all, the wide gallery filled with the citizens and the yeomen, with their wives and daughters, all in the gay holiday dresses of the period—it was a scene, take it for all in

all, such as the banks of coaly Tyne never had before, and never could again witness.

As Wladislas and his party and the royal family of Scotland were exchanging salutations, Isaac of Cyprus interrupted them, saying—

"Afterward, afterward—this is no time for idle ceremony. By the aid of that noble chieftain—whose true name and title, King William, thou now knowest—I placed the son of Richard of England at thy court, that he might, at the proper time, assist us in counteracting a plot against thee which had for years been in agitation. Until within these few days he knew not his own high origin, nor why he had been thus placed near thee; but even when only the unknown Robert de Moredun, he gave, ignorantly to himself, that plot a deadly blow, when he slew in mortal combat, at Newark Castle, the chieftain of Glenorchy.

"Yes, William of Scotland, thou mayest start and be amazed; and there are some here present whose cheeks may well blanch while they listen to that intelligence. King William, give orders to thy guards that no one leave this hall without thy royal mandate.

"My strength faileth me fast: give me the potion, Godfrey.—A plot was laid for gaining possession of the person of the heir to the Scottish throne; and, King William, I need not tell thee the fate of those of whom John becometh proprietor. Henry de Hastings joined in it, that he might himself hold possession of the boy; that with him, he might buy that hand which his own merits could not gain—the hand of the Lady Isabella of Huntingdon—the heiress presumptive, after the Prince, to the throne of Scotland. I joined in the plot that I might defeat both their schemes; my partner there," pointing to the body of the Lady Ada, while a spasm shot across his livid countenance, "saw in it the advancement of her own son. Suffice it, the elements favored us, the prince was taken to Dunsinane, where Hastings had wished him kept, until he had made his bargain with the Lady Isabella; but, in the mean time, we enticed her there, tried to set her mind at rest in regard to the safety of her cousin, but secured her secrecy by a painful discovery of which your Majesty shall shortly be informed. The burden she had to bear was heavy, but nobly hath she sustained it.

"I would at once have taken the prince to where he would have been safe, until the storm which threatened your royal house had blown over; but the Lady Ada would not leave the country until she had avenged herself on the murderers of her sister. She came from a clime, Queen Ermergard, where revenge is a duty. We had enabled, by employing the gentle Blondel there, the Princess Jean of Anjou, the Queen of Sicily, who standeth beside King Wladislas, to escape from Sherwood; and we had had for years under our charge, that, to her, long-lost daughter, now at her side, the Lady Anne of Sedbergh. We had important duties in regard to her to fulfill—we had to ele-

vate her out of her disguised obscurity to be, I hope, the mother of a royal race—from gracing a lowly station to confer honor on nobility itself.

"Thus situated, I bethought me of Marsden Rocks as a temporary place of safety for the Prince. I could not go there with the vessel, until ready to leave the coast altogether, else all the crew would have known my object. There was no way of accomplishing that object, save by a visit to the Crown and Anchor. Wladislas, to whom my plans could not be communicated—the execution of them was forced on me so rapidly—thought me false. He now knoweth to the contrary. There is a hand above us all. The wreck of the ship frustrated all our schemes. My desperate attempt to seize the boat, and take it to Monk-Wearmouth, where I thought I still had means at my command—that young man defeated—and he only did his duty.

"My Lord Chancellor, summon beside me here Malcom Beg, Adam Peebles, and Thomas Macduff.

"In those three young men, King of Scotland, thou hast subjects of whom a monarch may be proud. The youngest, Malcom Beg, who had the boldness to follow me from the Crown and Anchor, could more than once have escaped alone—no temptation could withdraw him from the side of the Prince, with whom he expressed his determination to live or die. Nay, such was his devotion, that although he knew that the young man, the companion of his boyhood, was near him, and would be the first person he would meet on escaping—such was his fear of compromising the Prince, should a suspicion arise of his being actually on the coast of England, that he did not reply to his signals, nor by a word denote the cause of his self-devotion. The two others, by their bravery, fidelity, and presence of mind, have contributed largely to break the meshes of the arch-deceiver who yet fills, and may for a short time longer fill, the throne of England."

The speaker here raised himself up a little, as if new strength had been given, while he spoke with a firmness and force his voice had not before possessed.

"King of Scotland, I place these humble subjects of thine thus before thee, thy nobles, and thy people, that I may render by the contrast the more striking, the conduct of those, of whom the nation thou rulest had a right to expect fidelity to the crown, and devotion to their country; I now accuse, and here put into the hands of the Lord Chancellor of thy kingdom, a parchment, proving the Earl of Sutherland, Hay of Errol, the chieftain of Glenorchy, now no more—with others of thy nobles, including Allen de Galway, and the Earl of Huntingdon, to be guilty of high treason, and of conspiring with John, King of England, to dethrone thee and thy issue, and to place on the throne the line of thy brother David."

Had a thunderbolt fallen into the midst of

the assembly, the sensation would have been trivial compared to the consternation which this intimation spread through the court.

The king and queen arose, and looked toward David of Huntingdon, as if expecting from his own lips a denial of the charge. The Earl, on whom all eyes were turned, slowly arose, and stepping forward on the dais, said, in a clear and almost unmoved voice—

“My royal brother—I have attached myself to and pursue a course of policy in regard to England, constantly in opposition to my private and personal feelings. I have preferred the welfare of my country to the gratification of brotherly affection. I have ever thought that nothing but the absorption of the Scottish in the English crown, or the perfect union of the two governments, can save this country, or tend to its lasting peace and prosperity. The policy, to this end, to which I lent myself, being for the present defeated, I retire from the court and country of Scotland, to my English possessions, and wish henceforth only to be known as an English knight. I look for a free passport, King of Scotland.”

William neither moved nor spoke; he seemed to doubt the reality of the scene before him. Without another word to his brother, and not daring to trust himself, as it appeared, with even a glance toward his daughter, David, Earl of Huntingdon, walked out of the hall, and was followed by Allan de Galway. No obstruction was offered him. He called such of his retainers together as were in the castle-yard; crossed the bridge below into the county of Durham, and joined the court of John ere it left the Bishop's palace for the South.

Maelstrom followed with his eyes, and with a bitter smile, the departure of the two conspirators; then, again addressing the king, he said—

“William of Scotland, I have little now to add. The party which sought thy ruin, and the ruin of thy house, is broken to pieces; and the head and mover of all, John Lackland, hath fallen into the pit he had himself dug. He meant to mock thee, when he sent by the hand of thy brother a marriage-contract to sign between thy son and his daughter—for he retained the deed in his own hands. It hath been reclaimed by Wladislas, who, in his descent from Marguerite of Anjou, could himself dispute the crown with John. With a prudence which I admire, and with a view to the real happiness of all I now see before me, he hath secured to thee that contract, by renouncing for himself and others all claims to the sovereignty of England. To the union of families thereby secured, he looketh for the future prosperity of Scotland. To it, look thou too, King William. To make this renunciation of Wladislas sure in fact, as it is in promise, I consign every written evidence of those claims to the flames.”

As the King of Cyprus thus finished his address, he threw some papers on the chafing-dish

at his side, which were speedily reduced to ashes; then, looking fixedly at the King of Scotland, and with his left hand seizing Godfrey's right hand, so as to prevent him interfering in the movement he made, he took a small vial from his breast, drank off the contents, and fell back a stiffened corpse.

The King and Queen of Scotland, placing each an arm around their son, knelt down on the dais. The whole assembly simultaneously arose, bowed their heads, and, with one voice, said—

“God save the King!”

When Adam Peebles, Thomas Macduff, and Malcom Beg had shut the door of their chamber in the Wool-pack that evening—

“Weel, Adam,” Macduff said, “what think ye o' this day's proceedings? For me, I never expected ither o' Allan o' Galway—what's bred in the bone is no easily ta'en out o' the flesh; and even when he was a breeless callant, selling pies on the streets o' Renfrew, he would nibble aff bits o' the crust, thinking his customers would never miss them. But as to Earl Davie, that sleekit pow o' his betokened better things.”

“Indeed, Tam,” Adam rejoined, “the langer I live, the mair truth I find in the remarks my mither had aye ready. Adam, she used to say, still waters are deep; and, it's the quiet sow that eats a' the draff—sayings which, on the present occasion, I would apply thus. Choose a hasty man for your friend rather than a man ye canna see through: and, never tak into your counsel a man that has a personal interest in the question ye've got to discuss; for, if he be honest, he begins by deceiving himself, and ends by deceiving you. There's no a class in society wi' which we are sae little acquainted as wi' ourselves. But what says out quiet neebor Malcom to a' this?”

“Deed, lads,” Malcom replied, “I never began to think till about a week ago; and I've a notion that I've thought as muckle in that week as will sair me in the way o' reflection till I get a wife, at ony rate. And the upshot o' my deliberations has been, that there are some honest rogues in the warld, but a great many mair roguish honest men.”

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUSION.

THE morning of the first of May, the year of Grace twelve hundred and ten, was a merry May morning in the forest of Ettrick and on the braes of Yarrow. Tables were spread on Newark Lee, banners streamed from the castle walls, the trees around were hung with garlands, May-poles were in every glade, joy in every countenance, excepting two—those of Eric Spence, the major-domo, and Elspeth Wedderburn, the housekeeper.

“I wish this day may end as merrily as I

begins," Elspeth remarked to Eric, as they were brushing up some stoups of very ancient workmanship, which had long been lying on the shelf; "I wish this day may end as weel as it begins; I saw three pyets this morning."

"A marriage Elspeth, a marriage in Scotland," Eric said; "but"—and he paused to puff away a spider which lurked within the handle—"a funeral in Germany."

"You shouldna hae done that, Eric," Elspeth said, with a look of great dismay; "it's no lucky. 'Brush awa an ettercap, but dinna blaw upon it,' was what my mither aye said, and she was very skilly. But what is the meaning o' a' this fracas, Eric? The laird looked to me yesterday as if he were fey."

"The king's coming, Elspeth."

This information, so far from seeming to please the old woman, put her in a state of fever.

"The king coming! oh, dinna say that, Eric, dinna say sic a thing. Wha ever heard o' kings coming to Ettrick but to herrie, and spoil, and ravish us! Tak back your words, Eric."

"Indeed, Elspeth, and I can not. There's nae doubt about it; he came to Selkirk last night. And our ain Godfrey's wi' him; and bringing a wife, too—a fine lady—a queen, or a countess, or something of that sort."

"Set him up!" Elspeth exclaimed, laying down her brush, and placing her hands in her sides, with her arms akimbo. "And what will Mary o' the loaning, and her faither, Thomas Scott, honest man, say to that? There's twa at a bargain-making, as weel as a marriage, Eric."

"Ay, so I said to John Brydone o' Selkirk, yesterday," Eric replied, "when he wanted to charge a groat instead o' three pennies, for clouting the jacks. Na, na, John, says I, there's three pennies for the first ane ye did, and three pennies for this, that makes sax pennies—and that makes baith you and me sensible, John, says I. There's naething like being sicker wi' accounts, Elspeth."

"Ay, Eric, ye may weel say sae, and a pretty booming up o' accounts there'll be, before a' this stramash is settled and paid for."

"Oh, it's no sae muckle the cost, Elspeth," Eric answered, proudly; "the laird's weel able to pay for a' he orders, though it were doubled, for that part o't. But it's the turning o' every thing upside down—the endless rubbing and scrubbing. And then it would be naething if it were ance done, and there an end o't; but it's nae sooner done than it's to do owre again; and thae gentles frae the south are sae fou o' fykes. And it's no as if there were only twa or three; but Anselme, he that was wi' Godfrey at Hexham, and wha saw a' the set-out there, tells me there's nae end to the tail they bring wi' them. I'll take good care that the tail gets the thin brewst, at any rate; tha'll be ae good turn they'll do us. The last brewst was clean soured that awfu' night o' the thunner; and the chaps at the bottom o' the table were complain-

ing about it and a' the curmurrings it gae them. I'll take good care that every drap o't is cleared out; this is no an opportunity that occurs every day for getting quit o' a bad article."

"Ye're quite right, Eric," the careful house-keeper added; "it's an ill wind that disna blaw good o' some kind or ither; and depend upon it, that the pots o' jellies and preserves farrest ben in the shelves shall a' be cleared out upon this occasion, before a single ane o' the new making is touched."

"What are you twa grunting and grenning here about?" Peggy Galbraith looked in and asked. She had been at Newcastle as waiting-woman to the Lady Jean, and had come on from Selkirk to give some directions to the maids up stairs. "Ye seem to be aye fashed when ye see ither people merry."

"It's no that, Peggy," Elspeth replied; "but a'boddy eats, eats, eats; and a'boddy drinks, drinks, drinks; but naeboddy thinks o' the scooring baith before and after. Tell ony o' thae gentles before they begin, that they'll hae to wash the dishes after they're dune, and, my certy! there wadna be sae muckle glaikrie and daffin'."

"Hoot, Elspeth," the waiting-woman said, "they're no bred till't, or they would think nae-thing o't. But, what's mair, ye do some o' them wrang. A very douce lad, ane they ca' Adam Peebles, that's come wi' them, and was married this morning to a cummer frae the south, that I didna think sae very muckle o', after a'—weel, he tells me that the bonnie Leddib' Anne, that our Godfrey was married to this morning, at the same time wi' a' the rest—a real leddie, ane o' the richest in a' England—waited upon him hersel' in an out-o'-the-way place in Yorkshire, and, he really believed, washed the plates, for he saw naeboddy else about the place that could hae done it. Sae dinna say owre muckle against them. A' the gentles are no sae proud as Tam Scott's wife o' the loaning."

"But what is the meaning, Peggy," Eric asked, "of sae mony weddings? Whar do a' the folk come frae? What's set them a' wud about marrying in this way?"

"Ou, ye see, Eric," Peggy answered, "it's the way o' thae great folk. They're aye getting into great miseries and mysteries; and as soon as they get out o' them, then they fa' to marrying like daft—for fear, I suppose, o' fa'ing into them again, as if marrying was a cure for a' earthly ills. If I thought it had been that, there's mair than ae offer I would hae ta'en afore this time o' day."

"But wha are they a' that have been married? And why and wherefore is it that our master is to be burdened with the whole coup o' them?" Eric asked.

"Ou, ye see, there's first o' a', that braw knight that was here, and was ill up stairs, after killing that Highland laird; he's a kind o' brither o' our ain Godfrey. It wadna hae done no to hae asked him. Then he marries the king's niece; so it would hae been an awfu'

slight no to hae invited the king himsel', honest man—besides, he's haen his troubles, and a bit o' recreation will no do him ony harm. His wife comes wi' him, as a matter o' course. There was anither reason for asking the king: there was a kind o' christening at the time o' the marrying, that couldna very weel hae been done without him: it was done wi' a sword, and that, ye ken, is no permitted to the priests. I couldna catch the name he gae to Godfrey; but I'll no forget in a hurry the way we a' looked at ane anither when he said to the ither, Rise up, Sir Robert de Brewis. I asked a very canty chield that was there they ca' Macduff, what the king meant by giein' him that title; and he said it was because he was to get a part o' the lands o' Allan o' Galway—in the tae part o' them they hae naething better than crowdy; in the ither part, whar they're better aff, they sup brewis, and because he gets that part, the king ca's him Robert of Brewis. I couldna help laughing, at the same time I was glad to find our gude king sae like himsel' again, for he used aye to be fond o' a joke, honest man."

"Weel, that's ane, Peggy; and what about the rest?"

"I've telled ye already about ane o' them—that is, Adam Peebles, a kind o' squire or servin' man o' Sir Robert's; he was married at the same time to be a kind o' set-off to his master's. Then there's Godfrey and his bonnie bride; and to keep them in countenance, a hallanshaker-looking chield, they ca' Malcom Beg, was married to a sweet-looking but shilpit kind o' lassie, they ca' Skinner, frae Scone. How she took a lad like that I can na comprehend—but there's nae accounting for tastes. Weel, there they were; a fine set out wi' our ain master at the head o' them, looking grander like than onybody there. I houp he'll no take it into his head to hae a wife like the rest o' them, or there would be a sair change o' market-days here."

"Na, na, Peggy," Elspeth said; "I think the laird has mair sense. He has got his cousin, Lady Jean, here now—she's had twa men already, ane o' them a king, and she's no likely to take a third at her time o' life—she's no a chicken. She's a douce, sensible woman, too, and 'll keep the house better for him than ony wife. Na, na, if the laird takes my advice he'll bide as he is—wives are easier got haud o' than got quit o'! Besides, lassie—but mind, this is a great secret—he speaks o' gaun owre the seas again, and gieing up the troop to Jock Murray o' Faa-Laa. It's no a bad thought, if he does gae away; for ther'll doubtless some of the troop gae wi' him, and Jock 'll no be at a loss to fill up the vacancies, for he's got a gude wheen bairns already, and his wife's aye cleckin yet."

Peggy was going away, but turned back to say—

"Eh, Elspeth, woman, but I had maist forgotten a real funny story that happened at Newcastle. Ye maun ken that Godfrey's bride has a fine house there. Weel, the evening after

her mither, Lady Jean, arrived there, they were looking owre some o' the fine napery, that the Laird o' Sedbergh had left her, and I was handing them the things out o' a box, when we heard a skirl in the next room; and though there was nae lamp, the windows were sae grand and big, and the moon sae clear, when we ran in, there we saw Godfrey hauding poor daft Edwin in his arms. And, O Elspeth! what a scene o' greetin' and laughin' followed. It seems that Godfrey had saved Lady Anne's life frae a fire, when she was in the dress o' a page, like that Edwin, or Blondel as they ca' him now, wears. I dinna think it was very decent mysel', but they ken best. Weel, what does Godfrey do, when he wanted to ken whether the bonnie page was in that house, instead o' dunting at the door, and speiring like ither sensible folk, he taks to singing at the windows. But that's the way wi' a' the gentles when they fa' in love—they aye get as mad as March hares—and Godfrey was weel saired for his folly, when he took to kissing a chap as daft as himsel'. But I maunna stand claverin here, there's a great deal to do up stairs."

And off Peggy ran. It is time, too, that we were not leaving such important affairs as were passing at Selkirk to the reports of chambermaids, but that we take a look ourselves into that town of souters and heroes—of men who have brought home trophies from the hardest and saddest battle-fields which Scotland ever fought, that their descendants might make them insignia of processions of King Crispin—who have preserved relics of a bravery without example in the hour of difficulty and of danger, to make them the admiration of dirty children, and the adoration of idle apprentices.

In that town, which at that time dreamt neither of Flodden fields nor Philiphaugh's, the royal cortége, which had been at Hexham, Alnwick, and Newcastle, took up its abode for a night, in order that, next morning, the quadruple nuptials might be celebrated, of which Peggy Galbraith had given her version to Eric Spence and Elspeth Wedderburn.

It may be supposed, but it can not be described, the sensation which such a marriage-party was calculated to produce in such a quiet little place. At the same time, it must be remembered, that Selkirk as it was, bore little resemblance to Selkirk as it is. It was not then a straggling street of shops for the retail of those useful articles in leather, wool, cotton, and thread, which it sends out in no contemptible quantities to other and more important places; with its quietude seldom disturbed, save by the mail-coach between Edinburgh and Carlisle, a county ball, or a King-Crispin procession. Situated on a high bank, overlooking the junction of the three rivers the most celebrated of all the streams of Scotland in the popular poetry of the country—and the old popular poets were no bad judges of scenery—walled in, possessing a strong castle, and, at the least, one religious edifice, not unworthy, in appearance, of the fortress which

it adjoined; exposed to constant attacks, in the almost never-ceasing Border feuds, and in the contests between England and Scotland; its inhabitants inured to the use of arms, and practised in their production, and in the fabrication of that durable kind of clothing which armor required, and which the rough handling of the times demanded. Old Selkirk held her head a little high among the Border towns, and was not in those days, and for long afterward, thought unworthy of royal visits and of royal grants.

We must not imagine, then, the royal marriage-party coming out of the mail-coach inn, and stepping across to the parish church—the gentlemen afraid to soil their shining shoes, and the ladies obliged to show their ankles, in order to keep their gowns out of the mire of the dirty street; we must fancy to ourselves a procession worthy of the chivalric times when nobles were known by the splendor of their habiliments and the gorgeousness of their caparison and armor—when ladies wore velvet buttoned with jewels, and required pages in satin doublets to walk beside their palfreys, that the trains of their robes might not ruffle even the sleek coats of their richly-adorned steeds—when even squires had breastplates, and bowmen slashed doublets and plumed bonnets; and, on the present occasion, we must think of such a procession rendered doubly gorgeous by the extraordinary nature and interest of the events which had given it birth, defiling through the corridors and courts of a stately castle, coming out of its lofty-arched gateways, winding through narrow streets, picturesque with the variety and singularity of their wooden fronts, and animated by the beauty and fashion of the period, waving banners, and showering down bouquets from the balconies and windows.

And if we follow this procession into the chapel of the monastery—see it ranged within the wide transept and aisles, and under the lofty groined and vaulted ceiling—behold it kneeling at a distance from the altar, to which the king and queen, and the noble-looking Ettrick chief, lead forward the two princely pairs, followed by the two humbler attendant couples, aspirants for the priestly blessing and the royal favor—the scene takes an interest to us who read of it, beyond what it possessed at the moment even to the actors in it; for, when the king called on Moredun to rise under the title of Sir Robert de Brewis, he was then pronouncing a name which the grandson of that Moredun was to surround with a lustre unsurpassed on the page of Scottish history. And when, in like manner, he desired the maternal brother of that Moredun to rise, under the title of Sir Godfrey de Bailenul—his fine countenance, then beaming with just pride as he gazed on his two princely subjects, would have been crossed by a deep shade of sorrow, could he have looked into the future, and seen that, in less than a century, the descendants of that Bruce and of that Baliol would rend his kingdom with their *dissensions*, and that the posterity of one of

them would deliver it bound into the hand of the King of England.

But we must not disturb even the memory of that happy occasion by such reflections; and, to get quit of them, we must accompany the bridal party on what would now be termed the “marriage excursion,” to Ettrick Forest and Newark Castle.

It so happens that, at the moment we write, we receive a communication which will set that excursion before us—not as we might be pleased to imagine it, but as it actually appeared to, and was enjoyed by, one of the many guests invited on the august occasion.

Johnnie Clayton, it seems, who had drawn up the marriage “settlements,” and whose importance on the occasion had caused great amusement to all “concerned,” had been invited to accompany the cortège—an honor which would certainly have turned the poor man’s head, but that he had such a dread, as he himself said, of “the reivers and other wild beasts of the Borders,” that the excursion acted rather as a safety-valve to what would otherwise have certainly brought upon him the fate of the cobbler’s dog, which died rather than “give the wall” to a cart.

An esteemed correspondent having, in the course of some most diligent inquiries, prosecuted along with the secretary of a literary institution at Newcastle, brought to light several papers, which, by statements considerably at variance with the ordinary doubtful assertions of history, have furnished us with many materials for this tale, now drawing to a close; and having also found among those papers an original letter signed J. C., Clericus V. (which, there can be no doubt, means John Clayton, Town-clerk), dated from Jedburgh, 4th May, 1210, we can not better conclude our narrative than by the insertion of a document so curious in itself, and so pertinent to our story. It is in these terms:

“Right trustie and excellent frende E. (supposed Elstob), wee are here at Jedburgh, in Scotlande, y^e forthe of Maye 1210; detainnd on thine affaire of the oxyne, the quhilk have hornes as y^e case itself hathe difficulties. Wee shall, natheless, do our best to extricate it.

“Seeing that, doubtlesse, greate anxietie is felt throughout Newcastle at this our unlooked-for detension, wee, alwaies desyrous of appeysing y^e publicke mynde, have determined to wryte to thee this letter.

“Our moste gracious sovereign Kyng William y^e Lyon, and the uther moste high and dignified personnes along with his grace’s majestie—fourre cuppelles of quhom wee, assisted by frere Hartley, one of y^e monkes of Tyrone, dwelling in y^e small butte plesant towne of Selkyrke, didde by our jointe efforts joyne togedder in moste holi^e matrimonie—these gracious personnes afforsayde, having done us y^e inexpressibel honor of invyting us to joyne them in a most royale and kynglie discourshion into y^e forreste of Yetterrick—we didde accom-

panie y^e yrunto with grete plesure and delectation.

"Butte, O gossyp, haddest thou bot seen there, y^e cattel and all the uther most wondrous annimals quhich abound in ye^e sayde forreste, thou wouldest not sette so grete store by quhat thy stalle setteth forthe on y^e Satturdays—for, not to mentyon oxyne and kyne of alle sortes, hartes, does, roes and sheepe, there are hayres in such multitudes, rabbetts, and then fowle as never was the lyke seene. Quherupon I would have looked, like holie Peetter, and would have desyred even to kill, bot that I alsoe saw bores most feyrce to looke untoe, and uther animales quheroffe I dydd not much admyre the lookes. The quhich thyng didde muche trubbel mee alle y^e tyme I was there; and didde make mee feel as iffe I didde not sytte upon y^e floweres of y^e rose.

"Butte, O gossyps—for doubtlesse thou E. wilt rede this atto y^e fyresyde of y^e Woollepacke—if yee had bot seene the joyntes of y^e sayde animales, rosted and boullied, on y^e tabils—with the stoupes of clarette, and y^e vesseles of Malvoisie—with y^e gayme, y^e comfyttes, y^e pasteys—your mouths would runne with watter, and your eies would be most keene to looke untoe. And then a Kyng, and another atte y^e hede of y^e tabel, lookingy moste kynglie also—statelie as Hardiknute y^e King offe y^e Daynes—quhilk branche of royaletie itte is welle for thes realmes doth not existe or is defuncte. Uppone the quhilk I will not insiste moe atte y^e presente tyme.

"There were, natheless, some grombellings at y^e lower ende of y^e table, anent y^e ayle, y^t they sayde was colde and thynne, and some didde saye y^t they hadde sore weymmes yrwith;—the quhilk I can not of my owne nowledge affirme, inasmuche as I didde moche prefere y^e malvoisie and y^e clarette, and dydde stycke yrunto.

"The quhilk matter being reportted unto y^e cheffe, hee didde saye y^t he was moche greeved yrbye; bot that hee would have an ayle made, soe strong, as y^t ane cuppe would make ane man dronke, and y^t hee would make eche quho came to hymme to drynk ane cuppe. Quhereat alle didde laffe, for alle menne do laffe quhen ane cheffe doth desyre to schow his wytt.

"Thus there was muche jocose and recreatement and alle were verie merrie—moste of all y^e yonge marred cupples, quho were lookingy most beautifulle to see;—whereof I myselfe didde wynnesse and regard; but most untoe Debborah quho didde blushe moche and was most charmynte to beholde: y^e quhich I should calle y^e princesse Anne bot y^t y^t is difficile untoe mee.

"Quhile these thynges were soe, and y^e myrthe most semple—quherin I myselfe didde partake with a damoselle most comelie too beholde, quho didde liffe in y^e forreste and was as ane nimf—inn y^e mids of y^e myrthe, ane shafte didde stryke the yonge nighte Schir Godfrey on y^e breste, the quhilk was sent by ane un-

known hande. Quherupon y^e ladyes didde turn most whyte to looke untoe; and his wyffe y^t I didde tye untoe hym, didde take him in her armes most lovingly—the like quherunto y^e nimf didde unto mee.

"Quherupon ane serche was mayd, and y^e yonge womman, to quhom he didde make love afforetyme, was founde withe ane darte in her bussom quhich shee didde stryke herself with.

"The quhilk didde cause hym y^t was so lyke Hardiknute to say, y^t even if y^e shafte didde not do harme unto Schir Godfrey, inasmuch as hee hadd ane corselette on hym, yette y^t hee should goo to his estatees in the Schyre of Yorke, for sae mickle as hee was too moche beloved by y^e nimfs in y^e forreste. Quherat his wyffe didde blushe moche.

"And manye moe thynges didde passe, quhilk were most joyeuse to see—sic lyke as daunces, quherin I didde not take parte as I could not louppe as didde y^e foresteres. I dydde contente myself withe y^e clarette and y^e damoselles as is moe fittyng in a clerc offe y^e court. Lykewyse yrunto didde agree frero Hartley, quho didde saye y^e graisse befor and after mete, as was mete. And hee hadde reson, for y^e cheffe didde order untoe hys monasterie six fatte buckes—whereof y^e frere was gladd. Moreover y^e Kyng sayde y^t hee would come offen to Selkyrke, and hee would also visite hys frende in y^e forreste with his fyf hundredth menne—y^e number whereof I didde reckenne befor dinner, y^t yee may not thynk y^e number yrof dubbeld.

"Then y^e cheffe didde saye, y^t for so mickle as y^e forreste offe Yettericke was named ane royale forreste, yette y^t nevir didde y^e Kingis or y^e queenis come to hunte yrin: hee didde therfor humble presente untoe hyr majestie, y^e presente, y^e forreste as ane hunting felde, y^e quhilk hir majestie didde most grashuslie receyve, thof shee bee so proude.

"Y^e were manie uther thingis done the quhilk ye would not beleeve and my penne can not descrieve—sic lyke as y^e songis quhich y^e harpur Blundelle didde syng untoe y^e eies of y^e ladie Isabelle, and toe y^e fayre face of y^e ladie Anne, quhilk he sayde was ane wytych of Westmoelande, alsoe y^t Marie was ane Efe, and y^t Addam y^e feirce X bowman myt haf lost twee parradyces for her. Mee he didde lyken untoe ane carman of sticks, and frere Hartlie untoe ane bote, for soe muche as wee dydde togidder lede y^e marred cupples intoe y^e delusyon felde. The quhich yee notte being poettes will not comprehende.

"Soe maye y^e saintes hafe yee in y^e holie keepyng.

"J. C. CLERICUS V."

One circumstance the worthy town-clerk of Newcastle has omitted, which is too intimately woven with our history to be passed over.

After dinner, "and the usual toasts," his Majesty said, that among all who had been accessory to the recovery of his son, and in bringing about those happy unions, which were the

cause of their meeting under such circumstances and in such a place, there was one individual whose modesty kept him in the background, but who ought not to be forgotten on such a joyous occasion. He need scarcely say, that he alluded to Thomas Macduff; and he wished him to mention what could be done for him that would in every way be the most acceptable, in addition to the houses and properties by which his Majesty had already given as trifling proofs of his royal satisfaction with his conduct, as well as with that of his two inestimable friends, Adam Peebles and Malcom Beg.

Macduff, pushed upon his feet by those friends, replied—

"Most gracious and honored monarch, I am a great deal mair than paid for my poor services, by seeing sae mony happy faces round me this day. But since your Majesty is sae kind, and as I maun say, that in regard to the matter

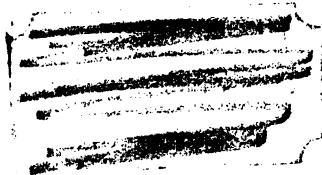
o' marriage ye hae done the thing very genteel for the others, I will e'en mak sae bauld as to pit up three petitions:

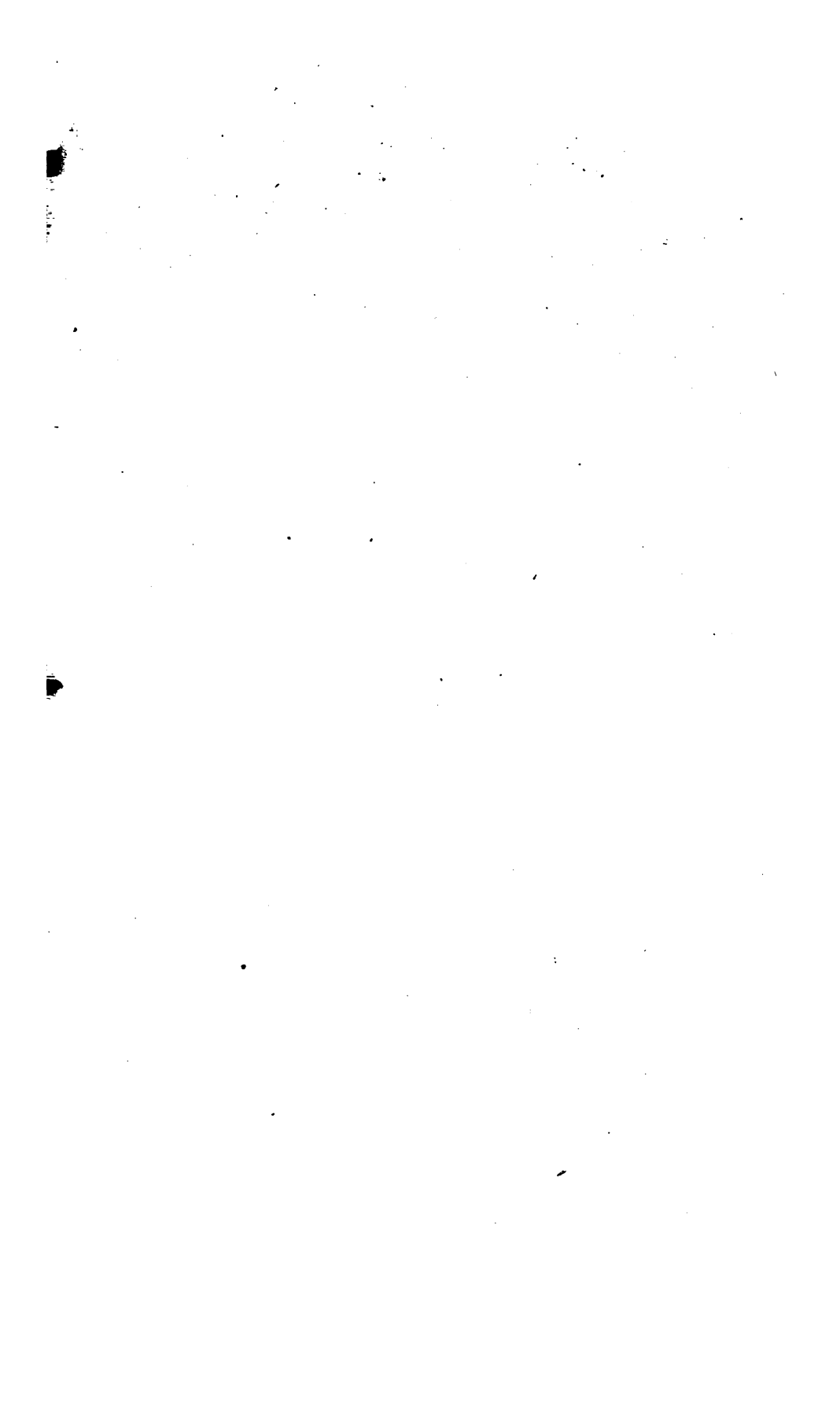
"First, That ye send to the other side o' the Tyne, Tavlah o' Birnam, to play the piper to his freend and cousin, Allan o' Galway, at the English court.

"Second, That ye mak trial o' Macduff o' Cluny, my faither's cousin, and that ye mak him *Clerk of the Pipe*, if his playin' be approved of.

"Thirdly and lastly, That ye send a royal message to Sherwood, to say, that if the lassie Elgitha there can be spared, she'll find gude plenishin' and a gude man waiting for her at Marsden Cottage, the dwelling, by the grace of your Majesty, o' Tam Macduff, forenent More-dun House, the residence of Adam Peebles, on the road to Edinburgh as ye come in frae the south."

THE END.





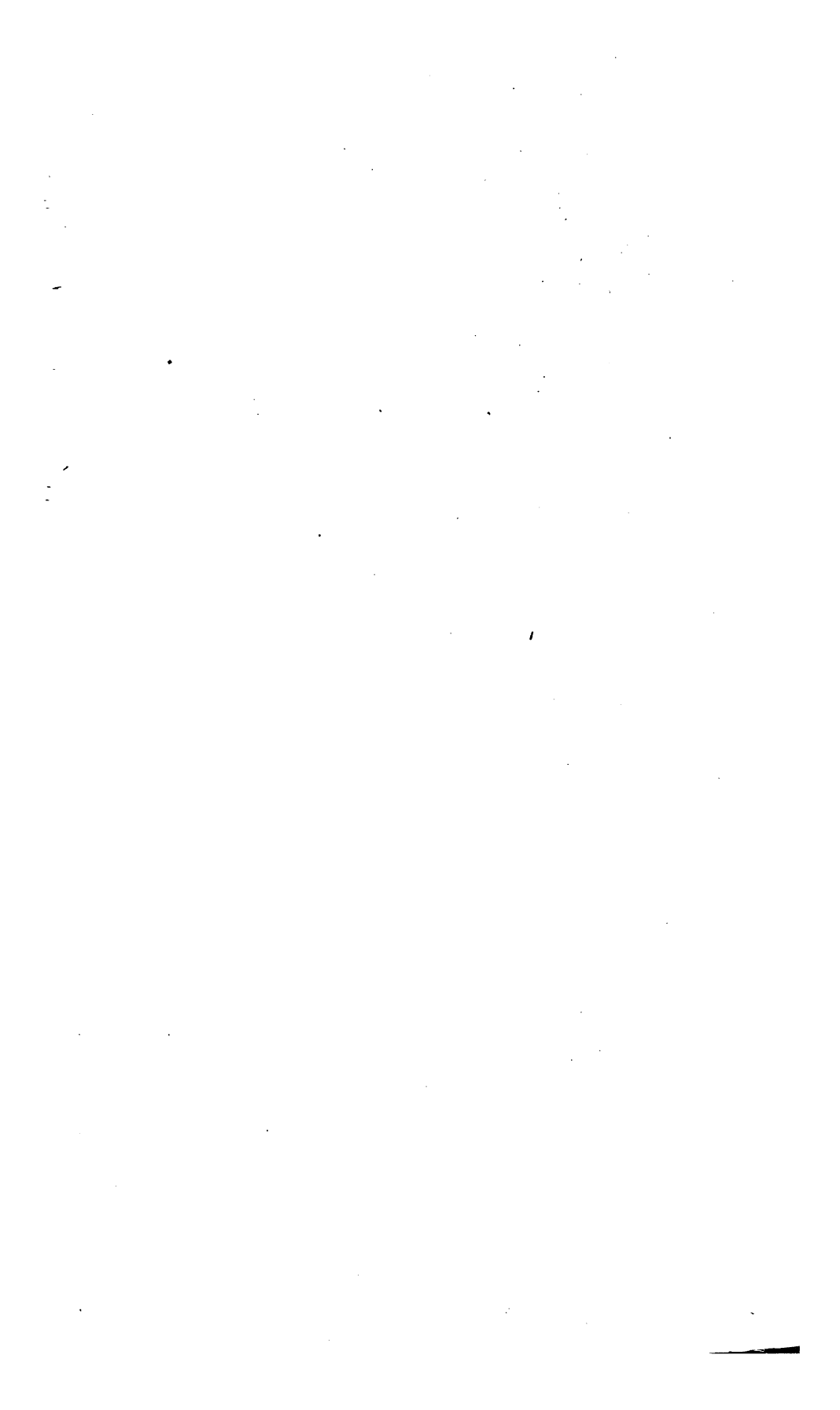






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